00022920

NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.

Digitized with financial assistance from

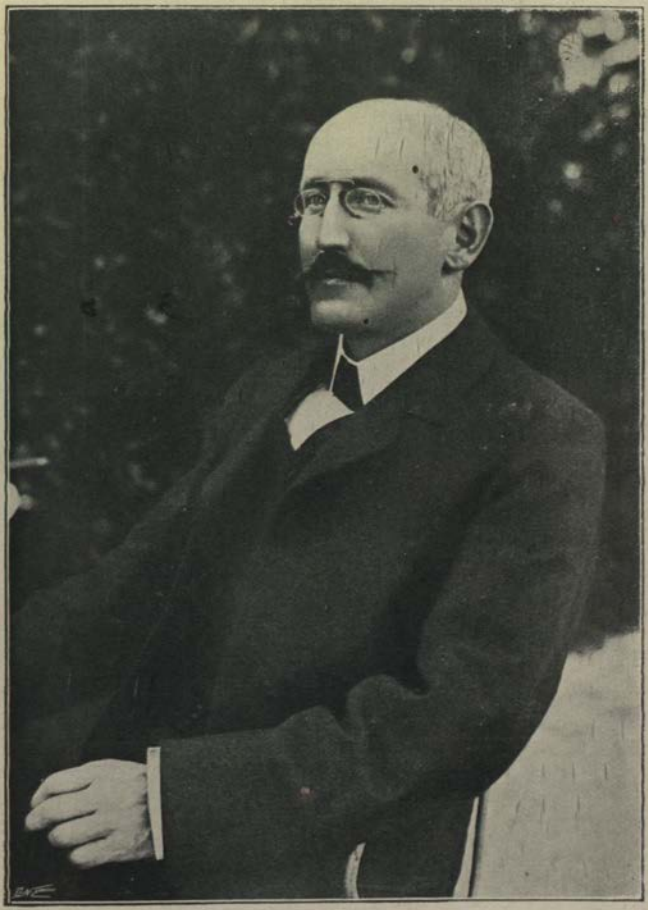
HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018

FIVE YEARS OF MY LIFE

This Edition is issued for circulation in India and the Colonies only



ALFRED DREYFUS

Frontispiece

FIVE YEARS OF MY LIFE

22920
a c

BY

ALFRED DREYFUS

B. 2583

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

yy. t. 67

LONDON
GEORGE BELL AND SONS
AND BOMBAY
1901

973.541

22920

TO

MY CHILDREN

PREFACE

I only recount in these pages my life in the five years during which I was cut off from the world of the living.

The events which occurred in connection with the trial of 1894, and in the following years, in France, remained unknown to me until the trial of Rennes.

A. D.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Portrait of Author	*Frontispiece*	
Captain Dreyfus immediately after his Degradation . . .	*To face page*	44
Outline Sketch of Devil's Island .	,,	94
Plan of Hut before Construction of Palisades	,,	95
Facsimile of Inscription of MS. Book used by Dreyfus . . .	,,	99
Facsimile of portion of his Diary .	,,	101
Facsimile of Quotation from "Hamlet," written in his Diary .	,,	195
Facsimile of keeper's signature in Diary	,,	235
Plan of huts after construction of palisade	,,	239
Second plan of hut	,,	241

List of Illustrations

View of Devil's Island, showing the prison hut . . . . . *To face page* 296

Captain Dreyfus on his way back from Devil's Island . . . „ 330

Captain Dreyfus and his family . „ 341

Five Years of My Life

I

I WAS born at Mulhouse, in Alsace, the 9th of October, 1859. My childhood passed quietly under the gentle influence of my mother and my sisters, and of a father deeply devoted to his children, and under the careful protection of brothers older than myself.

My first sad impression, of which the painful souvenir has never faded from my memory, was the war of 1870. On the conclusion of peace, my father chose to remain a Frenchman, and we were obliged to leave Alsace. I went to Paris to continue my studies.

In 1878 I entered the École Polytechnique,

which I left in 1880 to enter as pupil sub-lieutenant of artillery at the Military School of Fontainebleau. The 1st of October, 1882, I was appointed lieutenant in the 31st Regiment of Artillery, in garrison at Le Mans. At the end of the year 1883 I was classed in the horse batteries of the first division of Independent Cavalry at Paris.

On the 12th of September, 1889, I was promoted captain in the 21st Regiment of Artillery, detached as assistant at the Central School of Military Pyrotechny at Bourges. In the course of the winter I became engaged to be married to Mdlle. Lucie Hadamard, who became my devoted and heroic wife.

During my engagement I prepared myself for the École Supérieure de Guerre, which I entered on the 20th of April, 1890. The next day I was married. I left the École Supérieure de Guerre in 1892 with the note "very good" and the brevet of staff officer. My class-number on leaving the school entitled me to a subordinate place on the

General Staff, which I entered on the 1st of January, 1893.

A brilliant and facile career was opened to me; the future appeared under bright auspices. After the day's labours I tasted the repose and the charms of family life. Interested in all the manifestations of the human mind, I delighted in reading during the pleasant evenings passed at my own fireside. My wife and I were perfectly happy, and our first child enlivened our home. I had no worldly anxieties; the same profound affection united me with the members of my own and my wife's family. All that renders life happy seemed to smile upon me.

II

The year 1893 passed without any occurrence of note; my daughter Jeanne came to shed a new ray of sunshine in our home.

The year 1894 was to be the last of my

service on the General Staff of the army. During the last quarter of that year I was designated for the regulation period of service in a regiment of infantry stationed at Paris.

I commenced my duties on October 1st; on Saturday, the 13th of October, 1894, I received an official note requesting me to go on the following Monday morning at nine o'clock to the War Department, to be present at the general inspection, it being expressly enjoined upon me to appear in mufti. The hour named seemed to me very early for the general inspection, which ordinarily takes place in the evening, and the order to appear in civilian dress also surprised me. But after remarking these singularities when I read the official note, I attached little importance to them and forgot them speedily.

On Sunday evening my wife and I dined as usual at the house of her parents, which we left full of gaiety, and light-hearted as we always were after an evening passed in the family circle.

On Monday morning I took leave of those dear to me. My little son Pierre, then three and a half years old, who was accustomed to go with me to the door when I went out, accompanied me that morning as usual. This circumstance became one of my keenest remembrances in my misfortunes. Often in my nights of agony and despair I have recalled the moment when I had clasped my child in my arms for the last time, and that recollection seemed to endow me with renewed strength and will.

The morning was fine and cool, the sun had risen above the horizon, dissipating the thin, light fog, and everything indicated a splendid day. As I arrived at the War Office a short time in advance, I strolled for some moments before the building, and then went up to the offices. Upon entering I was received by Commandant Picquart, who seemed to be waiting for me, and who at once took me into his private room. I was surprised to see none of my comrades, as officers are always assembled in groups at

the general inspection. After a few minutes of trivial conversation, Commandant Picquart conducted me to the private office of the Chief of the General Staff. My surprise was great upon entering. Instead of meeting the Chief of the General Staff, I was received by Commandant du Paty de Clam, in uniform. Three persons in civilian dress, who were completely unknown to me, were also present. These three men were M. Cochefert, Chief of the Secret Police, his secretary, and M. Gribelin, Keeper of the Records. Commandant du Paty came up to me and said in a trembling voice, "The general is coming; whilst you are waiting, as I have a letter to write and have a sore finger, will you kindly write it for me?" However singular this request, made in such circumstances, I at once assented. I sat down at a little table already prepared, and Commandant du Paty seated himself close to me, following my hand with his eye. After first directing me to fill up an inspection form, he dictated to me a letter in which

certain passages recalled the letter of accusation, which I heard of afterwards, and which was known by the name of the "Bordereau." In the course of the dictation the commandant said sharply, "You tremble." I did not tremble. At the court-martial of 1894 he explained this brusque exclamation, saying that he had noticed that I did not tremble during the dictation, and that he had consequently thought I was playing a part, and had therefore endeavoured to shake my self-assurance. This vehement remark surprised me greatly, as well as the hostile attitude of Commandant du Paty. But as there was no suspicion in my mind, I supposed he was finding fault with my handwriting. My fingers were cold, as the temperature outside was chilly, and I had only been for a few moments in a warm room. I therefore replied to him, "My fingers are half frozen."

As I continued to write without emotion, Commandant du Paty tried a fresh manœuvre, and said to me violently, "Pay attention; it

is a serious matter." Though surprised at conduct as rude as it was unexpected, I said nothing, and simply endeavoured to write better. From that moment Commandant du Paty, as he stated before the court-martial of 1894, considered that I had all my presence of mind, and that it was useless to continue the experiment any further. The scene of the dictation had been arranged in advance in every detail, but the result had not answered the expectations of those who had devised it.

As soon as the dictation was finished Commandant du Paty rose, and, placing his hand on my shoulder, exclaimed in a loud voice, "In the name of the law, I arrest you. You are accused of the crime of high treason!" Had a thunderbolt fallen at my feet the effect produced upon me could not have been more violent. I stammered a few disconnected words, protesting against an infamous accusation which nothing in my life could justify.

Then M. Cochefert and his secretary

rushed upon me and searched me; I did not offer the slightest resistance, but cried to them, "Take my keys, open everything in my house. I am innocent." Then I added, "Show me at least the proofs of the infamous act which you pretend I have committed." "The charges are overwhelming," they replied, but refused to give me any information concerning their precise nature.

I was then taken to the military prison in the Rue du Cherche-Midi, by Commandant Henry, accompanied by an officer of the Secret Police. On the way Commandant Henry, who was fully informed of what had just taken place, as he had been present hidden behind a curtain during the entire scene, asked me of what I was accused. My reply was made the subject of a report of Commandant Henry, of which the falsehood was made evident by the interrogatory itself to which I had just been subjected, and which was subsequently renewed during several days. On my arrival at the prison

I was locked in a cell whose grated window looked upon the yard used by convicted felons. I was placed in solitary confinement, no communication with even my family being permitted. I had at my disposal neither paper, pen, ink, nor pencil. During the first days I was placed on the diet of convicted criminals, but this rigorous measure was afterwards cancelled.

The men who brought me my food were always accompanied by the sergeant of the guard and the warder, who alone possessed the key of my cell, and even they were forbidden to speak to me. When I found myself in that gloomy cell, under the atrocious impression of the ordeal to which I had been subjected, and the monstrous accusation brought against me—when I thought of the dear ones I had left full of joy and happiness only a few hours before, I fell into a state of terrible excitement, and wept with despair. I walked up and down my dungeon, beating my head against the walls. The governor of the prison came to

see me, accompanied by the warder, and quieted me for a short time.

I am glad to be able to give expression here to the gratitude with which Commandant Forzinetti, Governor of the Military Prisons, inspired me. I found in him, allied with a strict sense of a soldier's duty, the highest feelings of humanity.

During the seventeen days that followed I underwent numerous interrogatories by Commandant du Paty, who was invested with the functions of officer of Judicial Police. He always came late in the evening, accompanied by his clerk, the Record-Keeper Gribelin. He dictated to me fragments of sentences quoted from the incriminating letter, showing me rapidly, in the uncertain light, words or fractions of words taken from the same letter, asking me at the same time if I recognised my handwriting. Apart from that which has been recorded in my various examinations, he made all sorts of veiled allusions to facts concerning which I under-

stood nothing, and then withdrew with a theatrical flourish, leaving my brain filled with insoluble riddles. I was still in ignorance of the basis of the accusation brought against me, notwithstanding my reiterated demands. I could obtain no light upon the monstrous charge brought against me. I was simply struggling in a vacuum.

If my brain did not give way during those interminable days and nights, it was not the fault of Commandant du Paty. I possessed neither pen nor ink with which to record my ideas. At every instant I turned over and over in my memory the fragments of phrases which I dragged from him, and which only served to increase my bewilderment; but however acutely I was tortured, my conscience never failed to dictate to me my duty. "If you die," said the silent monitor, "you will be thought guilty; whatever happens, you must live to shout your innocence in the face of the world."

At last, on the fifteenth day after my arrest, Commandant du Paty showed me a

photograph of the incriminatory letter, since known as the "Bordereau."

I had not written this letter; I was not its author.

III

When the examination of Commandant du Paty was closed, the order was given by General Mercier, Minister of War, to open a regular inquiry. My conduct, however, was irreproachable; nothing in my life, my actions, or my communications with others could be impeached.

The 3rd of November, General Saussier, Governor of Paris, signed the order of inquiry.

The conduct of the investigation was confided to Commandant d'Ormescheville, Judge Advocate of No. 1 Court Martial of Paris, who was unable to find any precise offence imputed to my charge. His report was a tissue of mendacious allusions and

insinuations. Justice was done to this document at the court-martial of 1894. At the last hearing the Government commissioner terminated his indictment by recognising that everything had disappeared except the Bordereau. The Prefecture of Police, having investigated my private life, had made an absolutely favourable official report. The detective Guénée, who was attached to the bureau of the War Office, produced, on the other hand, an anonymous report made up entirely of calumnious stories. This latter report was the only one which figured in the court-martial of 1894. The official report of the Prefecture of Police, which had been placed in Commandant Henry's hands, had disappeared. The magistrates of the Supreme Court found the minutes of it in the dockets of the Prefecture, and caused the truth to be made known in 1899.

After seven weeks of inquiry, during which I remained as before in solitary confinement, the Commissary of the Govern-

ment, Commandant Brisset, on December 3, 1894, proposed the indictment, "the presumptions being sufficiently well founded." As a matter of fact the presumptions in question were founded upon the contradictory reports of experts in handwriting. Two of these, M. Gobert, expert of the Bank of France, and M. Pelletier, concluded in my favour; two other experts, MM. Teyssonnieres and Charavay, concluded against me, though at the same time pointing out numerous differences between the handwriting of the Bordereau and mine. M. Bertillon, who was not an expert, pronounced against me for pretended scientific reasons. It is well known that at the court-martial at Rennes, in 1899, M. Charavay publicly recognised his mistake.

On the 4th of December, 1894, General Saussier, Military Governor of Paris, signed the order of trial.

I was then placed in communication with Maître Demange, whose devotedness sustained me in the midst of all my troubles.

I was still refused the privilege of seeing my wife. At last, on the 5th of December, I received permission to write to her an open letter.

"*Tuesday, 5th December*, 1894.

"MY DEAR LUCIE,

"At last I am able to write you a word. I have just been informed that my trial takes place on the 19th of this month. I am not allowed to see you.

"I will not describe to you all that I have suffered; there are no terms in the world strong enough in which to do so.

"Do you remember when I used to say to you how happy we were? All life smiled upon us. Then suddenly came a terrible thunderclap, from which my brain is still reeling. I, accused of the most monstrous crime that a soldier could commit! Even now I think I am the victim of a terrible nightmare.

"The truth will come to light at last. My conscience is calm and tranquil, it

reproaches me with nothing. I have always done my duty; I have never wavered. I have been overwhelmed, prostrated in my dark prison, alone with my thoughts. I have had moments of wild madness, I have been light-headed even, but my conscience kept watch. It said to me: 'Lift up your head and look the world in the face. Supported by your conscience, walk straight on and right yourself. This is a terrible experience, but you must submit to it.'

"I will not write at greater length, for I want this letter to leave this evening.

"I embrace you a thousand times, for I love you, I adore you.

"A thousand kisses to the children. I dare not speak more to you of them; tears come to my eyes when I think of them.

"ALFRED."

The day before the trial commenced I wrote my wife the following letter; it expresses all the confidence I had in the loyalty and conscientiousness of the judges.

"At last I have reached the end of my sufferings, the end of my martyrdom. To-morrow I shall appear before my judges, my head held high, my soul at rest.

"The experience I have just gone through, a terrible experience though it was, has purified my soul. I shall return to you better than I used to be. I want to consecrate all that remains to me of life to you, to my children, to our dear relatives.

"As I told you, I have gone through terrible crises. I have had moments of real, wild madness, at the thought of being accused of such a monstrous crime.

"I am ready to appear before soldiers as a soldier who has nothing to reproach himself with. They will see my face, they will read my soul, they will gain the conviction of my innocence, like all those who know me.

"Devoted to my country, to which I have consecrated all my strength, all my intelligence, I have nothing to fear. Sleep peacefully, then, my darling, and have no care.

Think only of the joy which will be ours when we find ourselves shortly in one another's arms, quickly forgetting these sad and sombre days. . . .

"Awaiting that happy moment, a thousand kisses.

"ALFRED."

On December 19, 1894, the trial began, and was conducted with closed doors, in spite of the strenuous opposition of my counsel. I earnestly desired the publicity of the proceedings, in order that my innocence should be proclaimed in broad daylight.

When I entered the court, accompanied by a lieutenant of the Republican Guard, I could see nothing, hear nothing. I knew nothing of what was going on around me. My mind was completely engrossed by the frightful nightmare that had weighed upon me for so many long weeks, the monstrous accusation of treason, the inanity, the emptiness of which I was about to demonstrate.

I could only distinguish, at the back,

on the platform, the judges of the court-martial, officers like myself, comrades before whom I was at last going to completely prove my innocence. When at length I was seated in front of my counsel, M. Demange, I looked at my judges. They were impassive.

Behind them were the deputy judges, Commandant Picquart, the Ministry of War delegate, and M Lépine, the Prefect of Police. Opposite me was Commandant Brisset, the Government commissary, and Valecalle, the clerk.

The first incidents, the battle fought by Demange to obtain the publicity of the proceedings, the violent interruptions of the President of the court-martial, the clearing of the court, did not turn my mind from the aim towards which it was strained. I was anxious to come face to face with my accusers. I was anxious to destroy the miserable evidence of an infamous accusation, and to defend my honour

I heard the false and heinous deposition

of Commandant du Paty de Clam, the lying deposition of Commandant Henry, on the subject of the conversation between us on the way from the Ministry of War to the prison of the Rue du Cherche-Midi on the day of my arrest. I refuted them both energetically and calmly. But when the latter came back a second time to the bar, when he said that he had it from an honourable person that an officer of the Second Bureau was a traitor, I rose in indignation and violently demanded that the person whose words he quoted should be brought forward. Then, striking a theatrical attitude and beating his breast, he added: "When an officer has a secret in his head, he does not tell it even to his cap." Then, turning to me: "And there is the traitor!" In spite of my violent protestations, I could not get the meaning of these words made clear; therefore I could not prove the falseness of them.

I heard the contradictory reports of the experts; two of them gave evidence in my favour, two against me, though at the same

time pointing out numerous dissimilarities between the writing of the Bordereau and mine. I attached no importance to Bertillon's evidence, for it seemed to me to be the ravings of a madman.

All the secondary allegations were refuted at the sittings. No incentive could be brought forward to explain such an abominable crime.

At the fourth and last sitting, the Government commissary abandoned all the secondary counts, retaining only the Bordereau as evidence against me; he took up this document and flourished it, crying:

"There only remains the Bordereau; but that is enough. Let the judges take their magnifying-glasses."

M. Demange, in his eloquent speech, refuted the reports of the experts, pointed out all their contradictory statements, and concluded by asking how they could attach so much importance to such an accusation without the production of any evidence.

An acquittal seemed to me to be certain.

I was found guilty.

I learned, four years and a half later, that the uprightness of the judges had been overcome by the deposition of Henry as much as by the production, in the Council Chamber, of the secret and unknown documents of the prosecution, documents some of which were irrelevant and others forged.

The production of these documents in the Council Chamber was ordered by General Mercier.

IV

My despair was intense; the night which followed my condemnation was one of the most tragic in my tragic existence. I turned over the most extravagant projects in my mind. I was tired of all these atrocities, revolted at so much wickedness. But the thought of my wife, of my children, pre-

vented me from making any definite decision, and I resolved to wait.

The next day I wrote the following letter:

"*23rd December*, 1894.

"MY DARLING,

"I suffer much, but I pity you more than I do myself. I know how you love me; your heart must bleed. On my side, my loved one, my thoughts are always with you, day and night.

"To be innocent, to have led a blameless life, and to be convicted of the most monstrous crime that a soldier can commit—what can be more dreadful? It sometimes seems to me that I am the plaything of a horrible nightmare.

"It is for you alone that I have borne it until now; it is for you alone, my loved one, that I have endured this long martyrdom. Will my strength allow me to continue until the end? I know not. You alone can give me courage; it is from your love that I hope to derive it. . . .

"I have signed my petition for a revision.

"I dare not speak to you of the children; the thought of them breaks my heart. Tell me about them; let them be your consolation.

"My bitterness is so great, my heart so envenomed, that I should have already rid myself of this sad life if the thought of you had not stayed me, if the fear of increasing your grief still more had not withheld my hand.

"It is the most shocking moral torture for a man to have heard all that has been said to me, when he knows in his soul and conscience that he has never faltered, that he has never committed even the slightest imprudence.

"I will try, then, to live for you, but I need your aid.

"What is of the first importance is, no matter what becomes of me, to seek out the truth, to move heaven and earth to discover it, to expend, if need be, our fortune, to rehabilitate my name that has been dragged

in the mire. The undeserved stain must be washed out at all costs.

"I have not the courage to write to you at greater length. Embrace your dear parents, our children, and every one for me.

"ALFRED."

"Try to get permission to see me. It seems to me they cannot refuse it to you now."

On December 23, the same day, my wife wrote to me:

"*23rd December*, 1894.

"What a misfortune, what torture, what disgrace! We are all terrified, crushed by it. I know how brave you are, I admire you. You are an unhappy martyr. I entreat you, bear these new tortures bravely still. Our life, the fortune of all of us, shall be devoted to seeking out the guilty. We will find them—we must! You shall be rehabilitated.

"We have spent nearly five years of abso-

lute happiness; we must live on the remembrance of it; one day justice will be done and we shall be happy again; the children will love you. We will make of your son a man like yourself; I could not choose a better example for him. I trust I shall be allowed to see you. In any case, be certain of one thing, that, however far away they send you, I shall follow you. I do not know whether the law allows me to accompany you, but it cannot prevent my joining you, and I will do so.

"Once more, courage! you must live for our children, for me."

"*23rd December, evening.*

"I have just had, in my intense grief, the joy of having news of you, of hearing Me. Demange speak of you in terms so warm, so cordial, that my poor heart was comforted.

"You know that I love you, that I adore you, my own dear husband; our intense grief, the horrible infamy of which we are

the object, do nothing but tighten the links of my affection.

"Wherever you go, wherever they send you, I will follow you; we shall bear exile more easily together, we will live for each other . . .; we will educate our children, we will give them a soul well fortified against the vicissitudes of life.

"I cannot do without you, you are my consolation; the only gleam of happiness that is left me is to finish my days by your side. You have been a martyr, and you have still to suffer horribly. The punishment which will be inflicted on you is odious. Promise me that you will bear it bravely.

"You are strong in your innocence; imagine that it is some one other than yourself who is being dishonoured; accept the unmerited punishment; do it for me, for the wife who loves you. Give her this proof of affection, do it for your children; they will be grateful to you one day. The poor children embrace you, and often ask for their papa.

"LUCIE."

I had signed, without hope, my appeal for revision before the Court of Military Revision. As a matter of fact, a revision could not be referred to this tribunal except for an informality; I did not then know that my conviction had been illegally declared.

Days passed in agonising suspense; I vacillated between my duty and the horror which a punishment as infamous as it was undeserved inspired in me. My wife, who had not yet been able to obtain permission to visit me, wrote me long letters to sustain me and help me to bear the punishment of degradation.

"*24th December*, 1894.

"I suffer beyond anything that you can imagine on account of the horrible tortures that you are undergoing; my thoughts do not leave you for a moment. I see you alone in your sad prison, a prey to the most gloomy reflections; I compare our years of happiness, the sweet days we spent together,

with the present time. How happy we were, how good and devoted you were to me! With what perfect devotion you cared for me when I was ill, what a father you have been to our poor darlings! All this passes and repasses in my mind; I am unhappy at not having you with me, at being alone. My dear loved one, we must, we absolutely must, be together again; we must live for each other, for we cannot exist without each other. You must resign yourself to everything, you must bear the terrible trials that are in store for you; you must be strong and proud in your misfortune . . ."

"*25th December*, 1894.

"I weep and weep, and then weep again. Your letters alone bring me consolation in my great grief; they alone sustain me and comfort me. Live for me, I entreat you, my dear friend; gather up your strength, and strive—we will strive together until the guilty man is found. What will become of me

without you? I shall have nothing to link me with the world, I should die of grief if I did not hope to be with you once more and to spend many happy years by your side. . .

"Our children are charming. Your poor little Pierre often asks after you; I can only answer him with tears. This very morning he asked me if you were coming back this evening. 'I am worried, very worried, about my papa,' he told me. Jeanne changes enormously; she speak well, makes sentences, and improves very much. Take courage, you will see them again one day; our dreams, our plans will be renewed, and we shall be able to carry them out."

"*26th December*, 1894.

"I have been myself to take your things to the prison office; I have been in the sad prison where you are undergoing such a horrible martyrdom. For a moment I had the feeling that I was nearer to you; I should have liked to pull down the cold walls that

separated us and go to you and embrace you. Unfortunately, that is one of the things that the will is powerless to accomplish, one of the cases in which all one's physical and moral strength are not strong enough to conquer. I am waiting very impatiently for the moment when we shall be allowed at last to throw ourselves into each other's arms. . . . .

"I am asking an enormous sacrifice of you, that of living for me, for our children, of striving for reinstatement. . . . . I should die of grief if you were no more, I should not have the strength to continue a struggle for which you alone of all the world can strengthen me."

"*27th December.*

"I am never tired of writing to you, of talking to you; they are my sole happy moments; I can only do this and weep. Your letters do me so much good; thank you. Continue to spoil me. I will give the children the toys from you; there is no need

of that to make them think of you. You were so good to them that the little ones do not forget you. Pierre asks after you often, and in the morning they both come to my room to admire your photograph. . . . . Poor friend, how you must suffer through not seeing them. But keep up your courage; the day will come when we shall all be together again, all happy, when you can caress and love them.

"I beg you will not trouble yourself about what the crowd thinks. You know how opinions change. . . . Let it suffice you to know that all your friends, all those who know you, are on your side; intelligent people are trying to solve the mystery."

"*21st December*, 1894.

"I see that you have gathered courage again, and you have given it to me also. . . . Go through the sad ceremony bravely, raise your head and proclaim your innocence, your martyrdom, in the faces of your executioners.

"When this horrible punishment is over, I will give all my love, all my tenderness, all my gratitude, to help you to bear the rest. When one's conscience is free, with the conviction that one has done one's duty always and through everything, and with hope in the future, one can bear everything. . . .

"LUCIE."

On December 31, 1894, I learned that the appeal for revision had been refused.

The same evening Commandant Du Paty de Clam presented himself at the prison. He came to ask me if I had not committed some act of imprudence, some act of enticement to others. I answered him, earnestly protesting my innocence.

Directly after he had left, I wrote the following letter to the Minister of War:

"MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

"I have received, by your order, the visit of Commandant Du Paty de Clam, to whom I have again declared that I am

innocent, and that I have never committed even the least imprudence. I have been found guilty; I have no favour to ask. But for the sake of my honour, which I hope will one day be restored to me, it is my duty to beg you to be good enough to continue your researches. When I am gone, let them still continue to search; that is the only favour I beg."

I wrote afterwards to Maitre Demange, to inform him of this visit.

I had previously informed my wife of the rejection of the petition.

31st December, 1894.

"MY DEAR LUCIE,

"The petition has been rejected, as was to be expected. I have just been informed of it. Ask again for permission to see me.

"The cruel and disgraceful punishment is close at hand; I shall face it with the dignity of a pure and calm conscience. If

I were to say that I shall not suffer, it would be to tell an untruth; but I shall not falter. . . .

"ALFRED."

My wife replied:

"*1st January*, 1895.

"I sent yesterday afternoon to the Place with my request, and the answer was waited for in vain. Perhaps permission to see you will come to me to-morrow. For what reason can they refuse now? It would only be cruelty, barbarism. Poor, poor friend . . . How I long to embrace you, console you, and comfort you. My heart bleeds at the thought of the tortures that you have to undergo.

"To think of a beautiful soul like yours, with such lofty ideals, such unchanging goodness, such exalted patriotism, being tortured with such cruelty, such persistence, and having to pay the penalty—though innocent—for another who is basely hiding himself behind his villainy. It is not possible, if

there be any justice, that this traitor should not be discovered, that the truth should not be brought to light.

"LUCIE."

At last my wife was allowed to see me.

The interview took place in the prison parlour. This is a grey room, divided in the middle by two parallel latticed gratings; my wife was on one side of one of the gratings, I was on the other side of the second one.

It was under these dreary conditions that I was allowed to see my wife after all these sad weeks. I was not even allowed to embrace her, to clasp her in my arms; we were forced to talk from a distance. Nevertheless the joy of seeing her dear face again was great; I tried to read it, and to see the traces that suffering and grief had left on it.

After she had gone I wrote to her:

"*Wednesday*, 5 *o'clock.*

"MY DARLING,

"I want to write you these few words, so that you may find them to-morrow when you wake.

"Our conversation, even through the prison bars, did me good. When going down, my legs trembled under me, but I stiffened myself, so that I might not sink to the ground with emotion. Even at the present moment my hand is not very steady; this interview has shaken me greatly. If I did not insist upon your remaining longer, it was because my strength was exhausted; I wanted to go and hide myself and cry a little. Do not think by this that my heart is less courageous or less strong, but my body is rather weak after three months of prison . . .

"What did me most good was to feel that you are so courageous and so brave, so full of affection for me. Let us continue, my dear wife; we will force the world's respect

by our attitude and our courage. As for me, you must have felt that I have made up my mind to everything; I want my honour and I mean to have it; no obstacle shall stop me.

"Thank everybody; thank Maître Demange in my name for all he has done for an innocent man. Tell him how grateful I am to him; I was not able to say so myself. Tell him I count upon him in the struggle for my honour.

"ALFRED."

The first interview had taken place in the prison parlour. Events had endowed it with such a tragic character that Commandant Forzinetti asked and obtained permission to allow me to see my wife in his study, he being present.

My wife came to see me a second time; it was then that I made her a promise to live and to face bravely the affliction of the lugubrious ceremony that was awaiting me. After her visit I wrote to her:

"I am calm; the sight of you has done me good. The pleasure of embracing you, openly and fully, did me an immense amount of good.

"I could hardly wait for this moment. Thank you for the joy you have given me.

"How I love you, my good darling! Let us hope that all this will come to an end some time. I must husband all my strength.'

I saw for a few moments also my brother Mathieu, of whose admirable devotion I was fully conscious.

On Thursday, January 3, 1895, I learned that the punishment was to take place the next day but one.

"*Thursday morning.*

"I am told that the supreme degradation takes place the day after to-morrow. I was expecting it, I was prepared; nevertheless, the shock was great. I will resist, as I promised you. I will derive the strength that is still necessary for me from your love,

from the affection of all of you, from the thought of my darling children, from the supreme hope that the truth will be brought to light. But I must feel that your affection is radiating all around me, I must feel that you are striving with me. So continue your researches without truce or rest . . .

"ALFRED."

V

The degradation took place on Saturday, the 5th of January. I underwent the horrible torture without breaking down.

Previously to the terrible ordeal I waited for an hour in the garrison adjutant's room at the École Militaire. During those trying moments I summoned all my strength ; the remembrance of the fearful months which I had just passed came back to me. In broken accents I recalled the last visit which Commandant du Paty de Clam had made to me at the prison. I protested against the

vile accusation which had been brought against me. I reminded those around me that I had again written to the Minister to assure him of my innocence. By distorting the words I then uttered, Captain Le-Brun Renault, with a strange lack of conscientious scruples, afterwards gave currency to the story of a so-called confession, of which I first learned even the existence only in January 1899. If I had been informed of it before my departure from France, which took place in February 1895, that is to say more than seven weeks after my public degradation had taken place, I should have endeavoured to stifle this fable at the outset.

After the interval of waiting, I was conducted by an officer and four men to the centre of the square.

Nine o'clock struck. General Barras, who commanded the squad of execution, gave the order to shoulder arms.

I was suffering martyrdom, but I straightened myself and made a supreme effort to rally my strength, trying to sustain myself

by the remembrance of my wife and children. Immediately after the formal reading of the sentence I exclaimed to the troops :

"Soldiers, an innocent man is degraded. Soldiers, an innocent man is dishonoured ! Vive la France ! Vive l'armée !"

An adjutant of the Republican Guard came up to me and rapidly tore the buttons from my coat, the stripes from my trousers, and the marks of my rank from my cap and coat-sleeves, and then broke my sword across his knee. . . . I saw all these emblems of honour fall at my feet. Then, in the midst of my agony, but with head erect, I shouted again and again to the soldiers and the assembled people, "I am innocent !"

The parade continued. I was compelled to march round the entire square. I heard the howls of a deluded mob ; I could feel the shudder with which it looked upon me in the belief that the condemned man in their presence was a traitor to his country, and I made a superhuman effort to create

in their hearts the commiseration due to an innocent man unjustly condemned.

The march round the square was at last completed, the torture was over as I thought, but in truth the agony of that memorable day had only just begun.

I was handcuffed, and was taken in the prison van to the common lock-up on the other side of the Alma bridge. . . .

On reaching the end of the bridge I saw through the grated ventilator of the van the windows of the house where many pleasant years of my life had been passed, and where all my happiness was centred. My anguish at this pathetic sight was unspeakable.

On arriving at the lock-up, in my torn and ragged uniform, I was dragged from room to room, searched, photographed, and measured. At length, towards noon, I was taken to the Santé prison and locked in a convict's cell.

My wife was permitted to see me twice a week, in the private office of the governor of the prison, who at all times during my stay

CAPTAIN DREYFUS

From a photograph taken by the French police immediately after his degradation

To face p. 44

under his charge treated me with great kindness and consideration.

My wife and I continued to exchange numerous letters during this period.

"PRISON DE LA SANTÉ,
"*January* 5, 1895.

"MY DARLING,

"I will not tell you what I have suffered to-day; your grief is great enough already. I will not augment it.

"In promising you to try to live, in promising you to struggle until my name is rehabilitated, I have made the greatest sacrifice that a man of upright and sensitive nature, who has been robbed of his honour, can possibly make. I pray to God that my strength may not abandon me; my mental power is unshaken; a conscience that has nothing with which to reproach itself sustains me, but my patience and physical resources are nearly exhausted.

"I will tell you later, when we are happy

again, what I have undergone to-day; how, in all my tribulations, surrounded by truly guilty men, my heart has bled. I have asked myself what I was doing there. I seemed the victim of hallucination, but alas! my torn and sullied clothing brought me back rudely to the reality of my situation. The glances of scorn cast on me told me only too well why I was there.

"Alas! why cannot the human heart be laid open by a knife so that the truth it contains may be read. Then all the honest, worthy people who have crossed my path would have said to themselves, 'This is a man of honour!' But it is easy to understand their feelings; in their place, I could not have restrained my contempt for an officer who, I was assured, was a traitor. But alas! that is the pity of it; there *is* a traitor, but I am not the man."

"*January* 5, 1895, 7 P.M.

"I have just had a moment of terrible weakness, of tears mingled with sobs, my

whole body trembling with fever. It was the reaction after the terrible tortures of the day. It was to be, I felt it; but alas! instead of being allowed to weep in your arms, to lay my head upon your breast, my sobs have echoed only in the emptiness of my prison. It is over now; He lifted up my heart. I gather together all my energy. Strong in my conscience, pure and unsullied, I owe myself to my family and to the vindication of my name. I have not the right to falter; while there remains in me a breath of life I will struggle, hoping that light may soon make manifest the truth. And you also must not relax your efforts to penetrate the mystery. . . .

"ALFRED."

From my wife:

"*Saturday evening, January* 5, 1895.

"What a horrible morning; what atrocious moments! No, I cannot think of it; it causes me too much suffering. I

cannot realise that you, my poor friend, a man of honour, you who adore France, you whose soul is so good, whose sentiments are so noble, should suffer the most infamous punishment that can be inflicted on mortal man. It is abominable.

"You promised me that you would be courageous, and you have kept your word. I thank you for it. The dignity of your demeanour made a deep impression upon many hearts; and when the hour of rehabilitation comes, as it will come, the remembrance of the sufferings that you endured on that terrible day will be graven in the memory of mankind.

"I yearn to be near you, to comfort you, to give you strength. I had so fondly hoped to see you, my poor friend, and my heart bleeds to think that my permit has not yet come, and that I may still have to wait for the happiness of embracing you.

"Our darlings behave well, they are so gay, so happy; it is a consolation in our terrible misfortune that they should be so

young, so unconscious of what is passing around them. Pierre often speaks of you, and with such childlike affection that I cannot restrain my tears.

"LUCIE."

"PRISON DE LA SANTÉ,
"*Sunday, January* 6, 1895, 5 P.M.

"Forgive me, my loved one, if in my letters yesterday I poured out my grief and laid bare my torture. I must confide my sufferings to some one. What heart is better prepared than yours to receive the overflowing grief of mine? It is your love that gives me courage to live. I cannot help feeling the thrill of your love close to my heart.

"Courage, then, my darling. Do not think too much of me; you have other duties to fulfil. You owe yourself to our dear children, to our name, which must be restored to honour. Think, then, of all the noble duties which devolve upon you; they are onerous, but I know that you will be capable of undertaking and accomplishing them all, if you do

not permit yourself to be discouraged, and if you preserve your strength.

"You must struggle, therefore, with yourself; summon all your energy, think only of your duties. . . . .

"ALFRED."

From my wife:

"*Sunday, January* 6, 1895.

"I am much worried at not hearing from you. I am anxious to know how you have borne these horrible moments.

"Two letters from you have just been brought to me. It is a great consolation to receive them, and I thank you. I cannot tell you how grief-stricken I am at the thought of your sufferings. O, heaven! what martyrdom. I anticipated that a time would come when you would give way. I am sure it has done you good to weep. My poor dear, we were so happy, so tranquil, we lived only for ourselves and for our children. If only I could be near you to share your sorrow, your sufferings, stay in the same cell, and

live the same life as you, I would be almost happy. I should at least have the privilege to console you a little, to comfort you with my affection, and to bestow upon you the attentions which only a woman who loves can give. But I entreat you, keep up your courage. Do not be cast down."

"*Monday, January* 7, 1895.

"My first occupation this morning is to have a little chat with you, to try to send you a ray of sunshine in your dark cell. I suffer so much at the thought of your misery, which I am forbidden to solace, that everything around me which does not remind me of you seems utterly indifferent to me.

"I think only of you, I will live only for you, and in the hope that we may soon be reunited. Tell me, I entreat you, all you feel, and the state of your health. I have terrible fears that you will break down; oh, if I could only see you, if I could be with you, to try to make you forget a little your misfortune. What would I not give for such a boon!"

"*January 7, evening.*

"What could I say to you, except that I think only of you, that I speak only of you, that my whole soul, my whole mind, are stretched out towards you. I beg, I entreat you to have courage, not to be downcast, not to let grief wear you out, and to keep up your physical strength. We must succeed in rehabilitating you; we are doing everything, and will do everything, with that object. What is our fortune compared with the honour of a man, of children, of two families? I shall feel happy to have devoted all that we have to this noble task. . . . .

"We are all convinced that the mistake will be found out some day, that the guilty person will be discovered, and that our efforts will be crowned with success. . . . .

"LUCIE."

"LA SANTÉ PRISON,
"*Tuesday, January* 8, 1895.

". . . In my saddest moments, in the midst of my attacks of despair, a star

suddenly shines into my brain and smiles upon me. It is yourself, my darling, your loved self, whom I hope soon to see again, and by whose side I will wait patiently until I have restored to me what I hold dearest in this world, my honour, which has never been stained. . . .

"ALFRED."

From my wife :

"*Tuesday, January* 8, 1895.

"I was terribly anxious at not hearing from you, and passed a horrible night; but I received your dear letter this morning, and it did me good. I cannot understand at all why your letters are so long in coming; a letter written by you on Sunday does not reach me until Tuesday. . . .

"I have just received permission to see you on Monday and Wednesday, at two o'clock, in the governor's stu You may imagine my happiness ! . . .

"LUCIE."

Five Years of My Life

From La Santé Prison :

"*Wednesday, January* 9, 1895.

". . . Really, now that I come to think over it, I wonder how I could have had the courage to promise you to live after my conviction. That Saturday is stamped on my memory in letters of fire. I have the courage of the soldier who can look a danger in the face, but alas ! shall I have the soul of the martyr ? . . .

"I live in hope, I live in the conviction that it is impossible that the truth should not come to light, that my innocence shall not be recognised and proclaimed by this dear France, my native land. . . ."

"*Thursday, January* 10, 1895.

"I have not slept since two o'clock this morning, for looking forward to seeing you to-day. I fancy I can already hear your beloved voice speaking to me of our dear children, of our dear relatives . . . and I am not ashamed to weep, for it is indeed cruel

that an innocent man should suffer the martyrdom that I endure. . . .

"ALFRED."

From my wife :

"*Thursday, January* 10, 1895.

"I received last evening your letter of Tuesday, and I have read and re-read it ; I cried when I was alone in my room, and again this morning when I awoke. Last night I enjoyed a little rest ; I dreamed that we were talking together. But what an awakening ! what agony to find myself once more a prey to dark grief ! If I suffer so much, it is for you, who are enduring heroically the most terrible of martyrdoms, for you, who have been morally tortured in the most awful and most undeserved way.

"LUCIE."

From La Santé Prison :

"*Friday, January* 11, 1895.

"Forgive me if I sometimes complain . . . but I cannot help it. My thoughts of the

past are so bitter that I feel the need of pouring the overflow of my heart into yours. We have always understood one another so well, my loved one, that I am sure that your strong and generous heart beats with indignation, like mine.

"We were so happy! All life smiled upon us. Do you remember when I said to you that we could envy nobody anything? Position, fortune, mutual love, adorable children . . . in a word, we had everything.

"Not a cloud in the sky . . . then an awful, unexpected thunderbolt, so incredible, indeed, that even now I sometimes think that I am the victim of a horrible nightmare.

"I do not complain of my physical sufferings—you know that I treat such things with contempt; but to think that a terrible, infamous accusation is attached to my name, and that I am innocent. . . . Oh, not that! I have endured all these tortures, all these indignities, because I am convinced that soon or late the truth will be discovered and justice will be done me!

"I can well excuse the anger, the rage of this noble nation when they learned that there was a traitor among them . . . but I am going to live, so that they may know that this traitor is not I.

"Sustained by your love, by the boundless affection of all our relatives, I will conquer Fate. I do not say that I shall never again have moments of depression, even of despair. Indeed, to submit without complaint to such a monstrous error would need a greatness of soul to which I cannot lay claim, but my heart will remain firm and strong. . . .

"I will live, my loved one, because I want you to be able to bear my name, as you have done up to the present, with honour, with joy, and with love, because, in a word, I want to hand it down intact to our children.

"You must none of you be cast down by adversity; seek for the truth without intermission or rest. . . .

"ALFRED."

From my wife :

"*Friday, January* 11, 1895.

"How pleased I was to spend a few moments with you, and how short they seemed. I was so overcome by emotion that I could not speak to you or exhort you to courage ; poor friend, how I should have liked to tell you what I think of you, how much I admire you, how I love you, and how grateful I am for the immense sacrifice that you have made for me and for our children. I regretted that I had not spoken to you more of the hope we had of discovering the truth ; we are absolutely convinced of doing so. It is impossible to say how long it will be ; but you must have patience and not despair. As I told you then, we have only one thought, from morning till evening, and all night we are racking our brains to find a clue, some thread to help us to find the villain, the infamous wretch who has destroyed our honour.

"We are uniting intelligence and all our will; and with all the elements and the perseverance which we add to them, it is impossible that we should fail to vindicate you.

"Do not worry yourself about the children; they have both brave little hearts. . . ."

"*Saturday, January* 12, 1895.

"I am still shaken by yesterday's interview; I was terribly upset at seeing and talking to you; it gave me such pleasure that I could not close my eyes all night. It is splendid of you, in spite of all your sufferings, to keep such a valiant heart, such noble and lofty ideals. Yes, we must indeed hope that the day will come when the darkness will break, when your innocence will be recognised, when France will rectify her error and see in you one of her bravest, most noble sons. You will be happy once more; we will spend joyful years together; you, who made so many plans, who meant to make a man of your son, will still have that joy. Your little

Pierre is very good, and his sister is equally so. I used to be very strict with them, you remember, but I confess that now, although always exacting obedience from them, I am often inclined to spoil them. Let the poor children have some pleasure before learning the sadness of life. . . ."

"*Sunday, January* 13, 1895.

"What patience, what self-denial, what courage you must have to bear this long humiliation! I cannot express the profound admiration I have for you. The dignity and the willingness with which you accept martyrdom, for my sake and the sake of our children, are superhuman; I am proud of bearing your name, and when the children are old enough to understand, they will be grateful to you for the sufferings that you have endured for them. . . ."

"*Monday, January* 14, 1895.

"How sad it is that the short and longed-for moments of our interview have already

passed. How long moments of sadness are, and how quickly moments of happiness pass! Again this interview passed like a dream; I arrived at the prison happy, and returned from it overwhelmed by sadness. The sight of you did me good; I could not take my eyes from you, or cease to listen to you, but I suffered horribly at leaving you alone in that gloomy prison, a prey to your grief, to horrible moral torture, to unmerited suffering. . . .

"LUCIE."

My wife, worn out by this uninterrupted succession of agitating events, was obliged to take to her bed.

"*Friday, January* 18, 1895.

"What a sad day I am spending—worse than the others, if possible, for the only shadow of happiness which was granted us was refused to-day. I have been able to get up, but I am not yet strong enough to

go out; the doctor, in spite of my intense desire to see you and embrace you, feared that I should catch a chill; he wants me to keep my room until to-morrow. This grieved me very much, and I must confess that I was not very reasonable; I hid myself and cried.

"LUCIE."

This letter reached me only at the Île de Ré; my wife did not yet know of my departure.

VI

I left the Santé prison on January 17, 1895. As usual in the evening, I had put my cell in order and lowered my couch, and I went to bed at the regular hour, nothing having transpired to give me the slightest hint of my impending removal. I had even been told during the day that my wife had received permission to see me two days later,

as she had not been able to come for nearly a week.

Between ten and eleven o'clock at night I was suddenly awakened and told to prepare at once for my departure. I had only time to dress myself hastily. The delegate of the Minister of the Interior, who, with three warders, had charge of the transfer, showed revolting brutality. He had me hurriedly handcuffed while I was scarcely dressed, and gave me no time even to pick up my eye-glasses. The cold that night was terrible. I was taken to the Orléans railway station in a prison van, and then brought in a round-about way to the freight entrance, where were waiting the cars built specially for the transportation of convicts on their way to the penal colonies of Guiana or New Caledonia. The cars are divided into narrow cells, each barely accommodating a man in sitting posture, and when the door is closed it is impossible to stretch one's legs. I was locked up in one of these cells, my wrists handcuffed, and with irons on my ankles.

The night was horribly long; all my limbs were benumbed. The next morning I was trembling with fever, and able to obtain only, after many demands, a little black coffee with some bread and cheese.

At last, towards noon, the train arrived at La Rochelle. Our departure from Paris was not publicly known, and if on arriving the authorities had embarked me at once for the Île de Ré, I should have passed unrecognised.

But there were at the station a few loungers who were in the habit of coming to see the arrival of the convicts on their way to the Île de Ré. The warders thought it best to wait until the onlookers had gone. But every few minutes the chief warder was called away from the train by the delegate of the Ministry of the Interior, and then would return to give mysterious orders to the other guards.

Each of these warders went out in his turn and came back bustlingly, now closing one grating and now another, and whispering

in each other's ears. It was clear that this singular manœuvring would end by attracting the attention of the curious, who would say, "There must be an important prisoner in the van, and as he has not been taken out, let us wait and see him." Then once the warders and delegate lost their heads. It seemed that some one had been indiscreet, that my name was pronounced. The news spread abroad and the crowd increased rapidly. I had to remain all the afternoon in the car, hearing the crowd outside, which was becoming more turbulent as time went on. At last, at nightfall, I was taken from the car, and as soon as I appeared the clamour redoubled and blows fell on and around me. The crowd made sudden and angry rushes. I stood impassive in the midst of this throng, for a moment even almost alone, ready to deliver up my body to the fury of the mob. But my soul was my own, and I understood only too well the outraged feelings of these poor deluded people. I should have wished only, in

leaving my body to their mercy, to have cried out to them their pitiful error. I pushed away the warders who came to my assistance, but they answered that they were responsible for me. How heavy, then, is the responsibility weighing on those others, who, torturing a man, have also abused the confidence of an entire nation.

At last I got to the carriage which was to take me away, and after an exciting journey we came to the port of La Palice, where I was embarked in a longboat. The intense cold had continued and my body was benumbed, my head on fire, and my hands and ankles bruised by the irons. The trip lasted an hour.

On my arrival at the Île de Ré in the black night, I was marched through the snow to the prison, where I was received brutally by the governor. At the bureau of registry they stripped and searched me. Finally, towards nine o'clock, crushed in body and soul, I was led to the cell which I was to occupy. A guard-room adjoined my

cell, with which it communicated by means of a large grated transom opening above my bed. Night and day, two warders, relieved every two hours, were on guard at this window, and had strict orders not to lose sight of my slightest movement.

The governor of the prison notified me the same evening that when I had interviews with my wife they would take place at the bureau of registry, in his presence, that he would be placed between my wife and myself, separating one from the other, and that I should not have the right to embrace her, nor even to approach her.

Each day during my stay at the Île de Ré, after the walk I was allowed to take in the yard adjoining my cell, I was stripped and searched. A high wall completely separated the yard from the buildings and courtyards occupied by convicts.

But when I went to the yard for my daily walk, all the guards were stationed as sentries along its walls.

The letters exchanged between my wife

and myself convey our impressions of this period.

The following are a few extracts :

"Île de Ré,
"*January* 19, 1895.

"On Thursday evening I was roused from my sleep to set out for this place, where I only arrived last evening. I will not tell you about my journey for fear of breaking your heart; suffice it to say that I have heard the justifiable cries of a nation against one whom it thinks a traitor, that is to say, the basest of the base. I no longer know whether I have a heart. . . .

"Will you be good enough to ask, or get some one to ask, the Minister for the following favours, which he alone can grant: (1) the permission to write to all the members of my family, father, mother, brothers, and sisters; (2) permission to write and work in my cell. . . .

"At the present moment I have neither pen, ink, nor paper! They give me the

single sheet of paper on which I write to you, and then they take away my pen and ink.

"I do not advise you to come until you are perfectly well. The climate is very severe, and you need all your strength for our dear children in the first instance, and for the object you have in view in the second. As to my routine here, I am forbidden to speak of it.

"I remind you again that before coming here you must furnish yourself with all necessary permits to see me, you must ask for permission to embrace me, &c. . . ."

"Île de Ré,
"*January* 21, 1895.

"The other day, when I was insulted at La Rochelle, I wanted to escape from my warders, to present my naked breast to those to whom I was a just object of indignation, and say to them: 'Do not insult me; my soul, which you cannot know, is free from all stain; but if you think I am guilty,

come, take my body, I give it up to you without regret.' Then, perhaps, when under the stinging bite of physical pain, I had cried 'Vive la France!' they might have believed in my innocence!

"But what am I asking for night and day? Justice! justice! Is this the nineteenth century, or have we gone back some hundred years? Is it possible that innocence is not recognised in an age of enlightenment and truth? Let them search. I ask no favour, but I ask the justice that is the right of every human being. Let them continue to search; let those who possess powerful means of investigation use them towards this object; it is for them a sacred duty of humanity and justice. It is impossible then that light should not be thrown upon this mysterious and tragic affair. . . .

"I have only two happy moments in the day, but they are so short! The first is when they bring me this sheet of paper that I may write to you; then I spend a

few moments talking to you. The second is when they bring me your daily letter. . . .

"I dare not speak of our children. When I look at their photographs, when I see their sweet, gentle eyes, sobs rise from my heart to my lips. . . ."

"ÎLE DE RÉ,
"*January* 23, 1895.

"I receive your letters every day, but I have not yet received one from any member of the family; and I, on my side, have not received permission to write to them. I have written to you every day since Saturday; I hope you have received my letters.

"When I think of what I was only a few months ago, and compare my present miserable condition with it, I confess that I falter, I give way to fierce tirades against the injustice of fate. As a matter of fact, I am the victim of the most terrible mistake of our time. At times my reason refuses to believe it; I feel I am the plaything of a horrible hallucination, that it will all

vanish . . . but, alas! the reality is all around me. . . .

"ALFRED."

From my wife:

"PARIS,
"*January* 20, 1895.

"I am in a stupor of terror at not yet having news from you. I suffer horribly; it seems to me that as they go on torturing you they tear pieces out of my flesh. It is atrocious.

"How I wish I could be near you now, to sustain you with the depth of my affection, to speak some gentle words that might warm again a little your poor heart. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*January* 1895.

". . . . Very fortunately I had not read the newspapers yesterday morning; my people had tried to conceal from me the knowledge of the ignoble scene at La Rochelle, otherwise I should have gone

mad with despair. . . . What unspeakable anguish you must have endured. . . . But the conduct of the mob does not astonish me; it is the result of reading those wicked journals which live only by defamation scandal, and which have published so and many lies. . . . But be assured, among people who reason, a great change has taken place.

"LUCIE."

"PARIS,
"*January* 22, 1895.

"Still no letter from you; since Thursday I am without news. If I had not been reassured as to your health I should be bitterly anxious. . . .

"I think of you unceasingly; not a second passes without my suffering with you, and my suffering is so much the more terrible that I am far away from you without news, and that to this torture of every moment there is added such poignant anxiety. It seems as if I could not wait for the permit to rejoin

you and hold you in my arms. How many things I shall have to say to you. First the news of us all, of our poor children, of the whole family; then the superhuman efforts we are making to discover the key of the enigma. . . .

"LUCIE."

"PARIS,
"*January* 23, 1895.

"I have just telegraphed to the director of the prison to request news of you, for I can no longer control my anxiety. I have not received a single letter from you since you left Paris; I do not understand at all what has happened, and I am so dreadfully worried. I feel sure you must have written me each day, but if so, what is the reason of this delay? I am unable to find an answer. If only you have received my letters, so that you shall not be uneasy about us. It is fearful to be so far from each other and to be deprived of news. I should like to know that you are strong and courageous, to be reassured about your health,

and to know that you are less rigorously treated.

"LUCIE."

From the Île de Ré :

"*January* 24, 1895.

"After your letter dated Tuesday, you will have received none from me. How you must be suffering, my poor darling! What horrible martyrdom for us both! . . ."

"ÎLE DE RÉ,
"*January* 25, 1895.

"Your letter of yesterday has crushed me; grief was written in every word. . . ."

"I do not know on whom or what to fix my ideas. When I review the past, anger rushes to my brain; it seems so impossible that I should have been bereft of everything; when I think of the present my situation is so miserable that I look upon death as on the forgetfulness of everything; it is only when I turn towards the future that I have a moment of consolation. . . .

"Just now I was looking for several moments at the portraits of our dear children, but I could not bear the sight of them for long; sobs almost choked me. Yes, my darling, I must live, I must endure my martyrdom until the end, for the sake of the name that the dear little ones bear. They must learn one day that that name is worthy to be honoured, to be respected; they must know that if I esteem the honour of many people below mine, I set none above it. . . .

"Henceforth I shall only be able to write to you twice a week."

"Île de Ré,
"*January* 28, 1895.

"This is one of the happy days of my sad life, for I may spend half an hour with you, chatting and talking. . . .

"Every time they bring me a letter from you, a gleam of joy penetrates my deeply-wounded heart.

"I can no longer look back. Tears overcome me when I think of our past happiness.

I can only look forward, with the supreme hope that soon the great day of light and truth will dawn."

"Île de Ré,

"*January* 31, 1895.

"Here at last is another happy day, when I can write to you. I count them, alas! as happy days! I have received no letters from you since the one that was handed to me on Sunday last. What overpowering suffering! Up to now I had every day one moment of happiness—when I received your letter. It was an echo of all of you, an echo of all your sympathies to warm my poor frozen heart. I read over your letter four or five times, I drank in every word; little by little the written words transformed themselves into spoken words; I soon seemed to hear you speaking to me, quite close to me. Oh! delicious music that went to my soul! Then, for the last four days, nothing more, gloomy sadness, overpowering solitude. . . ."

From my wife :

"PARIS,
"*January* 24, 1895.

"At last I have received a letter from you. It reached me only this morning. I was wildly anxious. Oh, the tears I have shed over this poor little letter, which comes to me after so many days of misery! Even now the news I receive is only from the 19th, the day after your arrival, and this does not reach me till five days later. How little pity they must have to thus maltreat and torture two poor beings who adore each other, and who have in their hearts only upright and honourable feelings, with but one aim and one dream—to find the guilty one, and thus to vindicate their name, the name of their children, which has been unjustly dishonoured. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*January* 27, 1895.

"This morning I received your dear, kind letter; it gave me a moment's joy. Forgive

me my first letters, which were so despairing. I was discouraged for an instant, it is true. I was without news of you and ill with anxiety.

"That time is past, my will has regained its sway once more. I am strong again for the fight. We must both of us live, we must strive for your rehabilitation ; the light must break forth irresistibly. We shall only have the right to die when our task is accomplished, when our name has been cleared of this stain. Then happy days will return ; I shall love you so much ; your grateful children will love you so tenderly, that all your sufferings, frightful as they may have been, will be forgotten.

"I know that all these letters do not alleviate the fearful sufferings of the present, but you have a noble soul, a will of iron, and a conscience absolutely pure. With such safeguards you must resist, we must both resist together.

"Pierre employed himself this morning in looking at all my photographs of you, on

horseback, on your travels, at Bourges. He was happy at showing them to his little sister and prattling about everything that entered his mind. Jeanne listened to him with grave attention.

"LUCIE."

"PARIS,
"*January* 31, 1895.

"No news this morning, as I had hoped. Oh, what a life from day to day, in the hope of a brighter to-morrow.

"LUCIE."

From the Île de Ré:

"*February* 3, 1895.

"I have just spent a horrible week. I have been without news from you since Sunday last, that is to say, for eight days. I have imagined that you were ill, then that one of the children was . . . I have had all sorts of ideas in my fevered brain . . . I have invented all sorts of chimeras.

"You may imagine, my darling, all I have suffered, all that I still suffer. In my horrible solitude, in the tragic position in which events as strange as they are incomprehensible have placed me, I had at least this single consolation—that your heart was near me, beating in unison with mine, sharing all my tortures. . . ."

"Île de Ré,
"*February* 7, 1895.

"I have been without news of you for ten days. It is impossible to say how I suffer.

"As to you, you must keep up all your courage and all your strength. I ask it in the name of our deep love, for you must be there to wash from my name the stain that has been put upon it, you must be there to make brave and honest people of our children. You must be there to tell them one day that their father, a brave and loyal soldier, was crushed beneath an overwhelming fatality.

"Shall I have news of you to-day? When

shall I hear that I may have the pleasure and joy of embracing you? Every day I hope to do so, and nothing comes to break my horrible martyrdom.

"Take courage, my darling; you will have need of much, much; you will all need it, both our families. You have not the right to allow yourself to be cast down, for you have a great mission to fulfil, no matter what becomes of me.

"ALFRED."

From my wife:

"PARIS,

"*February* 3, 1895.

"Every morning I suffer a fresh disappointment, for the post brings me nothing. What am I to think? At times I ask myself if you are ill, what is happening to you. I fancy to myself everything dreadful, and during the long nights I am a prey to terrible dreams. If I could only be near you to console you and care for you, to help you to get back your strength. . . . I

have not yet obtained permission to come and see you. It is so long; it will soon be three weeks since you left for the Île de Ré, without any one of your family being allowed to embrace you.

"LUCIE."

"PARIS,
"*February* 4, 1895.

"I have had the happiness of receiving your kind letter. Think a little how happy I am to have news of you, although it has been so long coming, and is dated a week ago Monday. A long week for your gentle words to come to me. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*February* 6, 1895.

". . . I feel such sorrow when I look at our poor children, to think what happiness would be yours to have them near you, and to see them grow up, to watch over their education, and I cannot sometimes keep back the tears that fill my eyes.

"It is now nearly four months since you saw the poor darlings, and they have greatly changed. . . .

"LUCIE."

"PARIS,
"*February* 7, 1895.

"Your last letter was dated January 28. It took eight days to reach me, and since then I have had no news. It is very hard. I hoped with all my heart to be able to speak with you, if not by word of mouth, at least by letter. And now the scanty bits of news, which take so long a time to come, seem to reach me more and more seldom.

"I am still waiting impatiently for my permit to visit you, and hope to have it soon. I feel the greatest impatience to see you and embrace you, and to read in your eyes your courage, your patience, and your admirable self-denial and devotion to our children. . . .

"LUCIE."

"PARIS,
"*February* 9, 1895.

"This morning I received your letter of January 31. Your sufferings break my heart. I have wept and wept long hours, with my aching head between my hands, and the caresses of my little Pierre were needful to bring back a smile to my lips; and yet my sufferings are as nothing compared with yours. . . .

"Do not be anxious when you receive no letters from me. I write to you every day. It is the only good hour I have. I would not for worlds deprive myself of it.

"LUCIE."

"PARIS,
"*February* 10, 1895.

"I felt all the glee of a child yesterday evening when at last I received permission to see you twice a week.

"At last the time is coming when I shall have the joy of pressing you to my heart

and giving you new strength by my presence.

"I am distressed at your not receiving my letters; I have not failed a single day in writing to you. I cannot understand the reason of this harsh treatment; my letters expressed nothing but honourable and natural feelings—bitter grief for a situation so frightfully unjust, and hope that the wrong may soon be redressed.

"LUCIE."

My wife had been authorised to see me twice a week, for one hour at a time, on two consecutive days. I saw her the first time on January 13, without having been notified of her arrival. I was brought into the register office of the prison, which was a few steps from the door leading out to the court-yard. The office is a small, long, narrow room, whitewashed and almost bare. My wife was seated at one end, and the governor of the prison in the centre of the apartment, midway between my wife and myself. I

was required to remain near the door, at the opposite end of the room. In front of the door outside were posted several warders.

The governor notified us that we were forbidden to speak of anything concerning my trial.

Cruelly wounded as we were by the ignominious conditions under which we were allowed to see each other, and anxious as we were at feeling the minutes slip by with dizzy speed, we still experienced great inward joy at being again together.

Our greatest comfort was to feel acutely that our two souls henceforth were but one, that the intelligence and will of both would henceforth be directed towards the accomplishment of a single purpose—the detection of the truth and of the guilty one.

My wife came back to see me the following day, the 14th of February, and then returned to Paris.

The 20th of February she came again to the Ile de Ré; our last two interviews took place on February 20 and 21.

From my wife after her return to Paris :

"PARIS,
"*February* 16, 1895.

"What emotion, what a fearful shock we both felt at seeing each other again, especially you, my poor, beloved husband. You must have been terribly shaken, not having been warned of my arrival . . . . The conditions under which they allowed me to see you were really too heartrending. Now that we have been separated so cruelly for four months, to have the right to speak to each other only at a distance is atrocious. How I longed to press you to my heart, to clasp your hands in mine, to be able to console you with my love, poor, dear, lonely one! My soul was rent asunder when I left Saint Martin, going away from you. . . . .

"LUCIE."

"ÎLE DE RÉ,
"*February* 14, 1895.

"The few moments I passed with you were full of joy to me, though it was

impossible to tell you all that was in my heart.

"I spent the time in gazing at you, in filling my mind with the remembrance of your face, and in asking myself through what unheard-of fatality I was thus separated from you."

From Île de Ré, after having seen my wife:

"Île de Ré,
"*February* 21, 1895.

(*The day of my departure, though I did not know it.*)

"When I see you, the time is so short, I am so anxious for an hour to pass rapidly (which is now so strange to me, for all other hours seem to me so horribly long), that I forget to tell you half of what I had intended. . . . .

"I wanted to ask you whether the voyage fatigued you, and if the sea had been smooth I wanted to tell you all the admiration I feel for your noble character, for your admirable

devotion! More than one woman would have lost her reason under the repeated attacks of a fate so cruel and so unmerited.

"I wanted to speak to you at length of the children. . . . .

"As I told you, I will do my best to still the beating of my wounded heart, to bear this horrible and long martyrdom, that I may witness with you the happy day of my rehabilitation.

"ALFRED."

My wife, at the second interview, begged in vain that they should tie her hands behind her back and let her approach me and kiss me; the governor returned a rude refusal.

On February 21 I saw my wife for the last time. After the interview, which was from two to three o'clock, without either of us having been informed, I was suddenly told that I must get ready for my departure. The preparations consisted in making a bundle of my clothing.

Before the departure I was again stripped

and searched, and then led between six warders to the dock. There I was embarked on a steam-launch which brought me in the evening to the roadstead of Rochefort. I was taken directly from the launch to the transport *Saint-Nazaire.* Not a word had been spoken to me. Not a hint had been given as to the place to which I was to be transported. As soon as I reached the *Saint-Nazaire* they placed me in a condemned prisoner's cell, closed by a simple grating, and situated on the fore deck; the part of the deck in front of the convict cells was uncovered. The night was dark and the cold fearful, nearly fourteen degrees Centigrade (about seven degrees Fahrenheit). But only a hammock was given to me, and I was left without food.

The remembrance of my wife, whom I had left a few hours before in complete ignorance of my departure, and whom I had not even been permitted to embrace, the remembrance of my children and all the dear friends whom I had left behind me in sorrow and

despair, my uncertainty as to the place whither they were taking me, the situation in which I found myself—all these reflections plunged me into a state which cannot be described; I could only fling myself upon the floor in a corner of my cell and weep through the dark, cold night.

The next day the *Saint-Nazaire* weighed anchor.

VII

The first days of the voyage were very stormy; the cold in my open cell was frightful, and sleep in the hammock was well-nigh impossible. For food I had the rations of condemned prisoners handed me in old preserved-meat cans. I was watched by one warder during the day, and at night by two, having their revolvers beside them and being absolutely forbidden to speak to me.

After the fifth day, I was allowed to go

on deck one hour each day, accompanied by two warders.

After the eighth day the weather grew gradually warmer, and then became torrid. I comprehended that we were nearing the equator; but I remained in ignorance of the place of my transportation.

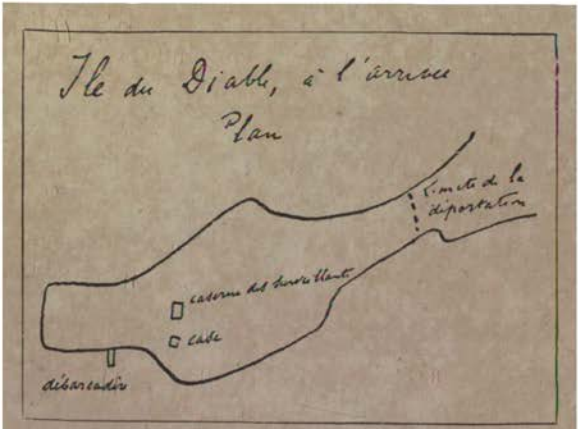
After fifteen days of this terrible voyage we arrived, on March 12, 1895, in the roadstead of the Îles du Salut. I had a hint of the place from bits of conversation among the warders, when speaking among themselves of places to which they might be sent; the names of the posts I recognised as belonging to localities in Guiana.

I hoped that I should be landed at once, but I had to wait nearly four days without going upon deck in this tropical heat and shut close in my cell. In fact nothing had been prepared for receiving me, and everything had to be hurried.

On March 15 I was landed and locked in a cell in the prison of the Île Royale; this strictly close confinement lasted nearly

a month. On April 13 I was taken to the Ile du Diable, a barren rock used previously for the isolation of lepers.

The Îles du Salut form a group of three

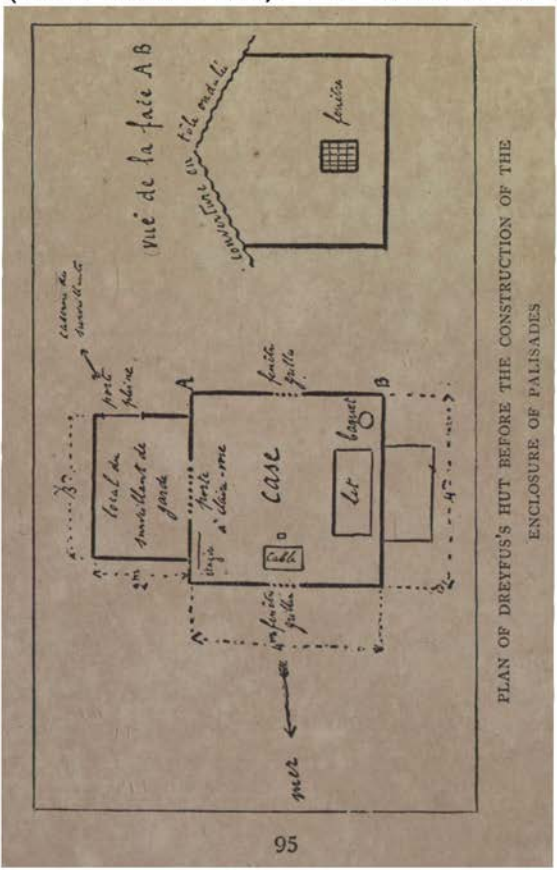


CAPTAIN DREYFUS'S OUTLINE SKETCH OF DEVIL'S ISLAND

small islands—the Île Royale, where the commander-in-chief of the prisons of the three islands has his dwelling, the Île Saint-Joseph, and the Île du Diable.

On my arrival at the Île du Diable the following arrangements were adopted concerning me; they lasted until 1896.

The hut for my occupation was built of stone, and measured four mètres square (about thirteen feet). The windows were



PLAN OF DREYFUS'S HUT BEFORE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ENCLOSURE OF PALISADES

barred; the door was a lattice-work of simple iron bars. This door opened out on an entrance two mètres square, which was attached to the front of the hut; the entrance was closed by a solid door of wood. In this entrance was stationed the warder on guard. These warders were relieved every two hours; they were not to lose sight of me, day or night. To facilitate the carrying out of this latter part of their service, the hut was lighted during the night.

By night the door of the entrance was closed inside and out, so that every two hours, when the guard was relieved, there was an infernal racket of keys and chains.

Five warders and their chief were employed in performing the duties of the service and in guarding me.

By day I was allowed to go about only in that part of the island comprised between the landing-place and the little valley where the lepers' camp had been, a space of about two hundred mètres (two hundred and twenty yards), and utterly bare; I was absolutely for-

bidden to leave these limits, under penalty of being confined to my hut. The moment I went out I was accompanied by the warder, who was not to lose sight of a single one of my movements. The warder was armed with a revolver; later on there was added to this a rifle and a cartridge-belt. I was expressly forbidden to speak to any one whomsoever.

At the beginning my rations were those of a soldier in the colonies, with no wine. I had to do my own cooking, and, in fact, to rely only upon myself.

The following pages are the exact reproduction of the diary which I wrote from the month of April 1895, until the autumn of 1896; it was destined for my wife. This diary was seized with all my papers in 1896, and was never handed over to my wife. I was able to obtain possession of it only at the Rennes trial, in 1899.

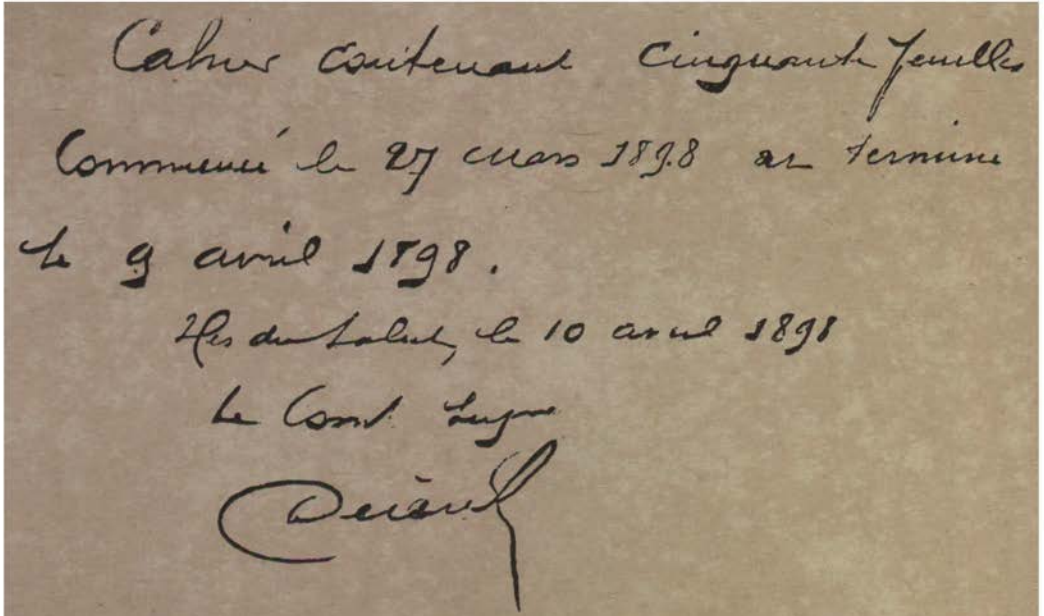
MY DIARY

(To be placed in the possession of my wife)

Sunday, April 14, 1895.

To-day I begin the diary of my miserable and terrible life. Indeed, it is only to-day that I have had paper at my disposal; every sheet is numbered and initialed, so that I cannot conceal or abstract any portion of it. I am responsible for the use made of it! But what could I do with it? Of what use could it be to me? To whom should I give it? What secret have I to confide to paper? Each of these questions is an enigma!

Until now I have had faith in reason, I have believed in the logic of things and

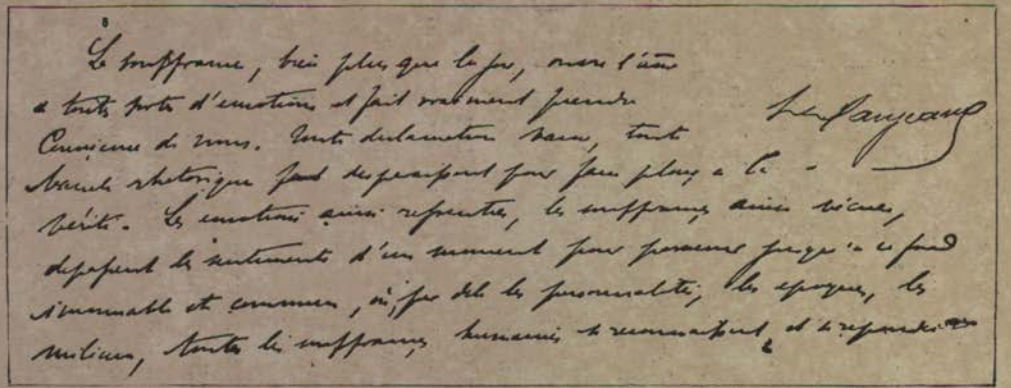

Cahier contenant Cinquante Feuilles
Commencé le 27 mars 1898 et terminé
le 9 avril 1898.
Iles du Salut, le 10 avril 1898
Le Cnel Lyon
Dreyfus

FACSIMILE OF INSCRIPTION ON THE COPY-BOOK CONTAINING FIFTY SHEETS OF WRITING-PAPER SUPPLIED TO CAPTAIN DREYFUS AT THE ÎLE DU DIABLE

events, I have trusted in human justice! Nothing strange or extravagant has found an abiding place in my mind. Oh, what a crumbling away of all my beliefs and all sound reason!

What fearful months I have passed, what sorrowful months still await me!

I had decided to kill myself after my iniquitous condemnation. To be convicted of the most infamous crime a man can commit, on the strength of a doubtful piece of paper, the handwriting of which was an imitation of my own, or which resembled it —this certainly is enough to drive to despair a man who holds honour to be above all else. My dear wife, so devoted and courageous, has taught me in this time of disaster that, since I am innocent, I have no right to abandon her or voluntarily give up the struggle. I feel that she is right and that my duty is clearly indicated; but yet I am afraid—yes, afraid—of the terrible moral sufferings I shall have to endure. Physically, I felt myself strong, my conscience



FACSIMILE FROM THE DIARY, SHOWING THE KEEPER'S SIGNATURE IN THE CORNER

026922

was pure and unsullied, and endowed me with more than human strength; but my physical and mental tortures have been greater even than I expected, and to-day I am bowed down in body and soul.

However, I have yielded to my wife's entreaties, and have the courage to live! I have undergone the most horrible ordeal that can be inflicted on a soldier—an ordeal worse than any death; then, step by step, I have traversed the hideous path which has brought me hither, passing through the Santé prison and the convict dépôt of the Île de Ré, enduring without flinching the insults and cries of the mob, but leaving a fragment of my heart at every turn of the road.

My conscience bore me up; my reason told me each day that the truth at last must burst forth triumphant; in a century like ours the light cannot long be suppressed; but alas! each day brought with it a fresh disappointment. The light not only did not break forth, but everything was done to prevent it from appearing.

I was, and am still, kept in the strictest close confinement ; all my correspondence is read and closely examined at the Ministry of the Interior in Paris, and often not forwarded. I have even been forbidden to write to my wife of the investigations which I wished to advise her to have made. It was impossible for me to defend myself.

I thought that, once in my exile, I might find, if not rest—that never can be mine until my honour has been vindicated—at least some tranquillity of mind and body which might permit me to wait for the day of rehabilitation. What a new and bitter disappointment !

After a voyage of fifteen days, shut up in a cage, I first spent four days in the roadstead of the Îles du Salut, without going on deck, under a tropical sun. My brain nearly gave way with suffering and despair.

When I was landed, I was locked in a cell of the prison, with closed shutters, prohibited from speaking to any one, alone with my thoughts, subjected to the regimen

of a convict. My letters had first to be sent to Cayenne. I do not know if they have yet been forwarded.

I remained thus for a month, locked in my cell, without once leaving it, in spite of all the bodily fatigues of my painful journey. Several times I nearly lost my reason ; I had congestion of the brain, and my horror of life was such that the thought came to me to refuse medical aid, and thus court the welcome death which would end my martyrdom. This would indeed have been deliverance and the cessation of my long agony, for I should not have broken my promise, and my death would have been only natural.

The remembrance of my wife and of my duty towards my children has given me the strength to nerve myself once more. I must not counteract her efforts and abandon her in her mission of seeking out the truth and the true culprit. For this reason I asked to see the doctor, in spite of my strong repugnance to every new face.

At last, after thirty days of close confinement, they came to remove me to the Île du Diable, where I shall enjoy a semblance of liberty. By day, I shall be able to walk about in a space a few hundred yards square, followed at every step by the warders; at nightfall (between six and half-past six o'clock) I shall be locked in my hut, four yards square, closed by an iron door, before which relays of warders watch me all the night long.

A chief and five warders have been charged with this service and with guarding me; my rations are half a loaf of bread a day, two-thirds of a pound of meat three times a week, and on other days tinned bacon or spiced meats. To drink I have water.

What a terrible existence of constant suspicion, of ceaseless vigilance, endured by a man who cherishes his honour as dearly as does any man in the world!

And still I never receive any news of my wife and children, though I have learnt that since March 9, nearly three weeks ago, there

have been letters for me at Cayenne. I have asked that telegrams may be sent to Cayenne and to France for news of my dear ones. There is no answer.

Oh, how I long to live until the day of rehabilitation, to let the world know my sufferings and give peace to my aching heart. Shall I bear up until that day dawns? I often have doubts, my heart is so broken and my health so shaken.

Sunday night, April 14–15, 1895.

It is impossible for me to sleep. This cage, before which the guard walks up and down like a phantom in my dreams, the torment of the vermin which infest me, the smouldering in my heart that I, who have always and everywhere done my duty, should be in this horrible place—all this excites and agitates my nerves, which are already shattered, and drives away sleep. When shall I again pass a calm and tranquil night? Perhaps not until I am in the grave,

when I shall sleep the sleep that is everlasting. How sweet it will be to think no longer of human vileness and cowardice!

The ocean, which I hear moaning beneath my little window, has always for me a strange fascination. It soothes my thoughts as it did before, but now they are very bitter and sombre. It recalls dear memories to mind, the happy days I have passed at the sea-side, with my wife and darling children.

I have again the violent sensation which I felt on the ship, of being drawn almost irresistibly towards the sea, whose murmuring waves seem to call to me, like some great comforter. This mysterious influence of the sea over me is powerful; on the voyage from France I had to close my eyes and call up the image of my wife to avoid yielding to it.

Where are the bright dreams of my youth and the ambitions of my manhood? Nothing longer lives within me; my brain wanders under the stress of my thoughts. What is the hidden mystery of this drama? Even now

I comprehend nothing of what has passed. To be condemned without palpable proof, on the strength of a forged scrap of handwriting! Whatever the soul and conscience of a man may be, is there not more than enough here to demoralise him?

The sensitiveness of my nerves, after all this torture, has become so acute that each new impression, even from without, produces on me the effect of a deep wound.

The same night.

I have just tried to sleep, but after dozing for a few minutes I awoke with burning fever; and it has been so every night for six months. How has my body been able to resist such a combination of torments, physical as well as moral? It seems to me that a clear conscience, assured of itself, must impart invincible strength.

I open the blind which closes my little window and look again upon the sea. The sky is full of great clouds, but the moonlight

filters through, tinging certain portions of the sea with silver. The waves break powerless at the foot of the rocks which define the form of the island. There is a constant lapping of the water as it plays on the beach, with a rude staccato rhythm that soothes my wounded soul.

And in this night, in the deep calm, there come back to my memory the dear images of my wife and children. How my poor Lucie must suffer from so undeserved a fate, after having possessed everything to make her happy! And happy she so well deserves to be, by her noble uprightness and loftiness of character, by her tender and devoted heart. Poor, poor dear wife! I cannot think of her and of my children without being stirred in every fibre of my being. I can only sob. My thoughts of them also inspire me to do my duty.

I am going to try to study English. Perhaps the work will help me to forget awhile my sorrows.

Five Years of My Life

Monday, April 15, 1895.

There was a deluge of rain this morning. No breakfast was sent me. The warders took pity on me and gave me a little black coffee and bread.

When there was an interval in the storm, I made the round of the small portion of the little island which is reserved to me. It is a barren place; there are a few banana-trees and cocca-palms, and dry soil from which basaltic rocks emerge everywhere.

At ten o'clock they bring me my day's food; a bit of canned bacon, a few grains of rice, a few green coffee berries, and a little brown sugar. I throw it all into the sea * and then try to make a fire. After several fruitless efforts I succeed. I heat water for my tea. My luncheon consists of bread and tea.

* I threw it all into the sea because the canned bacon was not eatable, the rice, which was brought to me in a filthy state, was offensive, and I had nothing with which to roast the coffee berries, which, in bitter derision, were given me raw.

What endless agony I am compelled to endure! What a sacrifice I have made in consenting to live! Nothing will be spared me, neither moral torture nor physical suffering.

Oh, that restless ocean, which is always muttering and howling at my feet! What an echo to my soul! The foam of the waves which break upon the rocks is so milky white that I could roll myself away with it and be lulled to rest.

Monday, April 15, *evening.*

I narrowly escaped having once more only a scrap of bread for my dinner, and I was fainting. The warders, seeing my bodily weakness, passed in to me a bowl of their broth.

Then I smoked, smoked to calm both my brain and the gnawing of my stomach. I again sent to ask the Governor of Guiana, as I had already done a fortnight ago, that I might live at my own expense, obtaining

canned food from Cayenne, as the law allows me to do.

Dear wife, at this very moment perhaps your thoughts echo my own. Have you any conception of the horrible martyrdom I am undergoing? Yes, you must feel all that I suffer from such a lamentable misfortune.

How the thought cuts me to the heart, that I have been condemned for so hateful a crime without comprehending anything about it! If there is justice in the world, my honour must be given back to me and the guilty wretch, the monster, must suffer the punishment that his crime deserves.

Tuesday, April 16, 1895.

At last I have been able to sleep, thanks to extreme exhaustion.

My first thought as I woke was of you, my dear and beloved wife. I asked myself what you were doing at the same moment. You must have been occupied with our darling children. May they be your solace and

inspire you with your duty if I give way before the end.

I have been out to cut firewood. After two hours of effort, I succeeded in getting together enough for my needs. At eight o'clock they bring me a piece of raw meat and a little bread. I kindle my fire, but the smoke is blown in my face by the sea-breeze, and my eyes are smarting. As soon as I have embers enough I put the meat on a few bits of iron which I have gathered together here and there, and cook it as well as I can. I breakfast a little better than yesterday, but the meat is tough and dry. As to my biil of fare for dinner, it was very simple—bread and water. The labours of the day have worn out my strength.

Friday, April 19, 1895.

I have not written anything for some days. All my time has been spent in the struggle for life, for I will resist to the last drop of my blood, no matter what punishments they inflict on me. The diet has not

changed; they tell me they are still waiting for orders.

To-day I boiled my meat with salt, and flavoured it with the wild peppers I had found in the island. This lasted three hours, during which my eyes suffered atrociously. How miserable!

And still I am kept without any news from my wife and my dear ones. Are the letters intentionally withheld from me?

Exhausted as I feel, it occurs to me that I may quiet my nerves by splitting the wood for to-morrow. I go to look for the hatchet in the kitchen. "You cannot enter the kitchen!" shouts the guard. And I turn back silently, but with head erect. Oh, if I could only live in my hut without ever leaving it! But I am compelled to take some food or die of starvation.

From time to time I try to study English, to write translations, and to forget myself in my work. But my brain is so utterly shaken that it refuses to labour; after a quarter of an hour I am forced to give up the task.

And then what appears to me so unheard-of and inhuman is that they intercept all my correspondence. I am fully aware that they are enjoined to take every possible and imaginable precaution to prevent any escape; that is the right, and I will even say the strict duty of the prison administration. But that they should thus bury me alive, prevent any communication, even by open letter, with my family—that is contrary to all justice. One might imagine the world had gone back to the Middle Ages! For six months I am kept in close confinement, without the power of assisting those who are working for the vindication of my honour.

Saturday, April 20, 1895;
11 *o'clock in the morning.*

I have finished my cooking for the day. This morning I cut my portion of meat in two; one piece is to boil, the other is for a steak. To cook the latter I have manufactured a grill with an old piece of sheet iron which I

picked up in the island. For drink I have water. And all my kitchen utensils are pots of old rusty iron without anything to clean them with, and without plates. I must summon all my courage to live under such conditions, with the further drawback of acute mental torture.

Utterly exhausted, I am going to seek rest on my miserable pallet.

Next day; 2 o'clock A.M.

To think that in the nineteenth century, in a country like France, imbued with ideas of justice and truth, such incredible wrongs can be inflicted! I have written to the President of the Republic, I have written to the Ministers, always asking them to search for the truth. They have not the right thus to allow the honour of an officer and his family to be overthrown with no other proof of culpability than a bit of hand-writing, when the Government possesses the means of investigation necessary to elicit

the truth. It is justice that I demand aloud, in the name of my honour.

I was so hungry this afternoon that, to stifle the gnawings of my appetite, I devoured, raw, ten tomatoes which I found in the island.*

Night of the Saturday to Sunday,
April 25, 1895.

The night was feverish. I dreamed of you, dear Lucie, and of our dear children, as I do every night.

How you must suffer, my poor love!

Happily, our children are still too young to know, else what an apprenticeship to life would be theirs! As for me, no matter what my martyrdom, my duty is to go to the end of my strength without faltering. I shall not fail.

I have just written to Commandant Du Paty to remind him of the two promises he

* The lepers had cultivated the island a little, and there are still traces of their work. The tomatoes, which now grow wild, were very numerous.

made me after sentence was pronounced: (1) In the name of the Minister to continue the investigations; (2) in his own personality to inform me as soon as there should be new leakages at the Ministry.

The wretched man who is the real author of the crime is on a fatal downward path, and will not be able to pause.

Sunday, April 21, 1895.

The chief commandant of the islands was kind enough to send me, this morning, along with my meat, two tins of condensed milk. Each tin holds about three quarts; by drinking a quart and a half a day, I shall have enough milk for four days.

I stop boiling the meat, which I could not make eatable. This morning I have cut it into two slices, and shall broil one of them for the morning meal, and one for the evening.

In the intervals of providing for my living, I continually think of my darling wife and

all my dear ones, and of all they must suffer !

Will the day of justice soon dawn ?

The days are long, and so are the minutes of each hour. I am incapable of any serious physical work ; moreover, from ten o'clock in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon, the heat is so great that it is not possible to go out. I cannot work at English the whole day ; my head will not allow of it. And I have nothing to read. I am always alone with my thoughts !

I was in the midst of lighting a fire to make my tea. The boat arrives from the Île Royale ; I have to retire into my hut ; these are my instructions. Are they afraid I shall communicate with the convicts ?

Monday, April 22, 1895

I rose at daybreak, to wash my linen, and to dry my cloth garments immediately afterwards in the sun. Everything here becomes damp, owing to the mixture of humidity and

heat. We have continual short torrential rain storms, followed by tropical heat.

Yesterday I asked the commandant of the islands for one or two plates, no matter of what sort ; he replied that he had none. I am obliged to tax my ingenuity to find something to eat from ; sometimes it is paper, sometimes it is old pieces of sheet iron, picked up on the island. The amount of filth I eat in this way is incredible. But I always make an effort to bear up against everything, for the sake of my wife and my children. And always alone, thrown back upon myself, with my thoughts. What martyrdom for an innocent man ; certainly greater than that of any of the Christian martyrs.

Still no news of my family, in spite of my repeated requests ; I have been without letters for two months.

Just now I received some dried vegetables in some old preserved-meat tins. In making use of these tins, in washing them and trying to turn them into plates, I cut my fingers.

I have just been informed, too, that I shall have to wash my linen myself. Now, I have nothing to do this with. I worked at that for two hours, but the result is not very satisfactory. The linen will always have to be soaked in water.

I am worn out. Shall I be able to sleep? I fear not. I am such a mixture of physical weakness and extreme nervousness that when I am in bed my nerves get the upper hand of me, and my anxious thoughts turn to my family.

Tuesday, April 23, 1895.

Still the same struggle for life. I have never perspired so much as I did this morning, when I was out cutting wood. I have simplified my meals still more. This morning I made a kind of stew with beef and white beans; I ate half of it this morning; the rest is for this evening. Thus, I shall have to cook only once a day.

But this food, cooked in old rusty iron

utensils, gives me violent pains in the stomach.

Wednesday, April 24, 1895.

To-day canned bacon: I threw it away. I am going to make myself a stew of dried peas; this will be my food for the day. Internal pains almost continually.

Thursday, April 25, 1895

They dole me out boxes of matches one by one—I cannot understand why, as they are safety-matches—and I have always to return the empty box. This morning I could not find the empty box; a scene and threats ensued. I found it at last in one of my pockets.

Night of Thursday-Friday.

These sleepless nights are awful. I get through the days somehow, with the help of my thousand domestic duties. I am, as a matter of fact, obliged to clean out my

hut, do my cooking, look for and cut up wood, and wash my linen.

But as soon as I lie down, however exhausted I may be, my nerves get the upper hand of me, and my brain begins to work. I think of my wife, of the sufferings that she must be enduring; I think of my dear children, of their gay and thoughtless prattling.

Friday, April 26, 1895.

To-day, canned bacon: I threw it away. The commandant of the islands came afterwards and brought me some tobacco and tea. I should have preferred condensed milk to tea; I had applied for it, too, from Cayenne, for the internal pains are continuous. They have *lent* me four flat plates, two deep ones, and two saucepans, but nothing to put in them.

They brought me, too, some reviews, sent me by my wife. But still no letters; it is really too inhuman.

I am writing to my wife; this is one of

my rare tranquil moments. I always exhort her to courage, to energy; for it must be made apparent to all the world, without exception, that our honour is, as it has always been, pure and stainless.

This terrible heat saps all one's strength and physical energy.

Saturday, April 27, 1895.

On account of the great heat at ten o'clock in the morning, I have planned out my time differently. I rise at daybreak (5.30); I light a fire to make my coffee or tea. Then I put the dried vegetables on the fire; afterwards I make my bed, clean my room, and begin dressing.

At eight o'clock they bring me my rations for the day. I finish cooking the dried vegetables; on meat days I cook the meat. In this way all my cooking is done by ten o'clock, for I eat cold in the evening what is left of the morning meal, as I do not care to spend another three hours in front of the fire in the afternoon.

At ten o'clock I breakfast. I read, I work, I dream, and, above all, I suffer, until three o'clock. Then I complete my toilet. When the hottest part of the day is over, that is to say, about five o'clock, I go out and cut wood, draw water from the well, wash my linen, &c. At six o'clock I eat cold what remains from breakfast. Then I am locked up. This is when time hangs most heavily. I have not been able to persuade them to let me have a lamp in my hut. Of course the warders have a watch-lamp, but its light is not strong enough for me to be able to work by it for long. So there is nothing left for me but to go to bed; and then it is that my brain begins to work, that all my thoughts turn towards the frightful drama of which I am the victim, and to my wife and children, and all who are dear to me. How they must be suffering also!

Sunday, April 28, 1895.

It is blowing a hurricane. Squalls come up one after the other, and make a loud,

sonorous noise, things collide and dash against one another! How like my state of mind in its attacks of violence! I should like to be strong and powerful like the wind which is shaking the trees and tearing them up by the roots, that I might hurl from my path all the obstacles which bar the way to truth.

I want to fling aside all my sufferings, to cry aloud all the rebellion that is in my heart against the ignominy which has been heaped upon an innocent man and his family! Ah! what punishment does not the man deserve who has committed this crime! Guilty towards his country, towards an innocent man, towards a whole family given over to despair —that man must be unlike anything in nature.

I learned to-day how to wash cooking utensils. Hitherto I have been cleaning them simply with hot water, using my handkerchiefs for dish-cloths. In spite of all my efforts, they remained dirty and greasy. I thought of ashes, which contain a large pro-

portion of potash. This succeeded admirably, but what a state my hands and my handkerchiefs are in !

I have just been told that, until further orders, my linen will be washed at the infirmary. This is a good thing, for I perspire so freely that my flannels are completely saturated and want a thorough cleansing. Let us hope that this temporary order will become final.

Same day, 7 o'clock in the evening.

I have been thinking much of you, my dear wife, and of our children. We used to spend the whole of Sunday together. The time has passed slowly, very slowly, my thoughts darkening in proportion as the day advanced.

Monday, April 29, 10 A.M.

Never have I been so tired as I was this morning. I have had to make several journeys for wood and water. In addition to this, the breakfast that is waiting for me

consists of stale beans, which have already been on the fire for four hours, and refuse to cook, a little tinned beef, and water for drink. In spite of all my mental energy, my physical strength will give way if this regimen continues much longer, especially in a climate which is so enervating in itself.

Midday.

I have been trying to sleep a little, but in vain. I am worn out with fatigue, but as soon as I lie down the remembrance of all my troubles comes back to me, all the bitterness of so unmerited a fate rises from my heart to my lips. My nerves are too tightly strained for me to be able to enjoy a refreshing sleep.

In addition to this, the weather is stormy, the sky is overcast, the heat heavy and stifling.

I should like to see the rain come down and refresh this everlastingly humid climate. The sea is of a glaucous green, the waves seem heavy and massive, as if concentrating

themselves for a great upheaval. How preferable death would be to this slow agony, this never-ceasing moral martyrdom. But this is denied me; for the sake of Lucie and my children I am obliged to struggle on to the end of my strength.

Wednesday, May 1, 1895.

Ah, these dreadful nights! Nevertheless I rose yesterday morning as usual at half-past five, I worked hard all day, I took no siesta, towards evening I sawed wood for nearly an hour, until my arms and legs were trembling, and in spite of all this I did not fall asleep until midnight.

If I could only read or work in the evening, but they lock me up without a light, about six or half-past; my hut is simply and insufficiently lighted by the warders' watch-light, yet when I am in bed even this is too much.

Thursday, May 2, 11 *o'clock.*

The post from Cayenne arrived last evening. Has it brought me letters, news of my

family? This is the question I have been asking myself the whole morning. But I have been so often deceived during these last months, I have learnt so many things about the human conscience, that I doubt everything and everybody except my own family. I have great hope, I am sure, that they will clear up the mystery, such high ideals of honour have they; they will take neither truce nor rest until their object has been attained.

I wonder, too, whether my letters reach my wife. What a sad and terrible martyrdom is this for both of us, for all of us!

But I must be strong; I must have my honour, and that of my children.

My isolation is so complete that it often seems to me that I have been buried alive.

Same day, 5 P.M.

The boat is in sight, coming from the Île Royale. My heart beats as if it would break. Is it bringing me at last the letters from my

wife that have been at Cayenne for more than a month ? Shall I at last read her dear thoughts, shall I receive the echo of her affection ?

I experienced an overwhelming joy on being told there were letters for me at last, which was followed immediately by a cruel, horrible reaction, on finding out that they were letters addressed to the Île de Ré, and previous to my leaving France. Can they be intercepting the letters that are sent to me here ? Or are they sent back to France, that they may be read first ? Could they not at least inform my family, if this were so, so that they might take the letters straight to the Ministry ?

Nevertheless, I sobbed bitterly over these letters dated more than two months and a half ago. Is it possible to imagine a parallel case ? All night I shall dream of Lucie, of my beloved children, for whom I must live.

No news, either, of the things I ordered from Cayenne, such as cooking utensils or food ; nothing has reached me.

Five Years of My Life

Saturday, May 4, 1895.

How long the days are, spent all by myself, without news of any of my people. All day long I ask myself what they are doing, how they are getting on, what is the state of their health, how are the researches progressing? The date of the last letter I received was February 18.

The mornings slip away, so busy am I with the struggle for existence, from half-past five in the morning until ten o'clock. But the food I take does little towards keeping up my strength. To-day, canned bacon. I breakfasted on dried peas and bread. Menu of dinner, the same.

I jot down here and there the petty worries of my daily life, but they disappear very quickly before a far greater trouble—that of my honour.

I suffer not only from my personal tortures, but on Lucie's account and that of my family. If they only get my letters! How

anxious they must be on my account, in addition to all their other worries.

Same day, evening.

In the silence which reigns around me, broken only by the beating of the waves against the rocks, I recollected the letters that I wrote to Lucie when first I came here, in which I described all my sufferings to her. And my poor wife must be suffering enough from this terrible state of affairs without my breaking her heart with my complaints. I must overcome my feelings by sheer force of will; by my example I must give my wife the strength necessary for her to accomplish her mission.

Monday, May 6, 1895.

Always alone with my thoughts, without news of my family. And I must live with my troubles, and I must endure my horrible martyrdom with dignity, to inspire my wife, all my family, with courage, for assuredly

they are suffering as much as I am. Accept your fate until the day of light shall dawn; you must, for the sake of your children.

I try in vain to quiet my nerves by physical work, but neither the climate nor my strength allow me to do so.

Tuesday, May 7, 1895.

A torrential downpour since yesterday. In the intervals, a hot and oppressive dampness.

Wednesday, May 8, 1895.

I have been so unnerved to day by this deathlike silence, and being without news of my family for nearly three months, that I tried to quiet my nerves by sawing and chopping wood for nearly two hours.

By sheer dint of will I forced myself to work at my English again; I do so for two or three hours a day.

Thursday, May 9, 1895.

This morning, after rising as usual at daybreak and making my coffee, I had a fainting

fit, followed by a profuse perspiration. I had to lie down on my bed.

I must struggle against my weakness; I must not break down until my honour had been restored. Then only shall I have the right to have fainting fits.

In spite of all my resolutions I had a violent attack of weeping when I thought of my wife and my children. Oh! the day must come, my honour must be restored to us! Otherwise I would rather know that both my children had died.

A terrible day. An attack of weeping, an attack of nerves; nothing was wanting. But the mind must dominate the body.

Friday, May 10, 1895.

A violent fever last night. The portable medicine-chest given to me by my wife has not been sent to me.

Saturday, May 11, *Sunday,* 12, *Monday,* 13.

Bad days. Fever, gastric troubles, disgust of everything. What is going on in France

all this time? How are the researches progressing?

Thursday, May 16, 1895.

Continued fever. A worse attack yesterday evening, followed by congestion of the brain. I got them to send for the doctor, for I must not lose ground in this way.

Friday, May 17, 1895.

The doctor came yesterday evening. He ordered me forty centigrammes of quinine a day, and is going to send me twelve boxes of condensed milk and some bicarbonate of soda. So I shall be able to put myself on a milk diet, and shall not have to eat the food that is so repugnant to me that I have taken nothing for four days. I should never have believed that the human body had such power of resistance.

Saturday, May 18, 1895.

The boxes of condensed milk from the infirmary are not very fresh, but at any rate

they are better than nothing. A few minutes ago I took forty centigrammes of quinine.

Sunday, May 19, 1895.

A wretched day. Unintermittent tropical rain. The fever has abated, thanks to the quinine.

That I may have them always under my eyes, I have placed the portraits of my wife and my children on my table. I must use all my energy, all my will, in their behalf.

Monday, May 27, 1895.

One day is like another, dull and monotonous. I have just written to my wife to tell her that my moral energy is greater than ever.

I must, I will, have the broad light of day thrown upon this miserable business.

Ah, my children! I resemble a wild animal, over whose dead body the hunter must pass in order to reach its young.

Five Years of My Life

Wednesday, May 29, 1895.

The rain continues ; the weather is heavy, stifling, enervating. Oh, my nerves ! how I suffer with them. And to think that I cannot even expend my tremendous energy, my will-power, in vegetating, to say nothing of living.

But every dog has his day ! The wretch who committed this infamous crime will be unmasked. Oh, if I only had him here for five minutes, I would make him undergo all the torments that he has been the means of making me suffer ; I would tear out his heart and his entrails without pity.

Saturday, June 1, 1895.

The mail from Cayenne has just passed under my eyes. Shall I get recent news of my wife and my children ? Since I left France, that is, since February 20, I have had no news of my family. Ah ! I shall soon have run the whole gamut of suffering and torture.

Sunday, June 2, 1895.

Nothing, nothing! Neither letters nor instructions on my behalf; always the silence of the tomb.

But I will bear up, supported by my conscience and the knowledge that I am right.

Monday, June 3, 1895.

The mail, on its way to France, has just passed. My heart palpitated and beat as if it would break.

The mail is carrying you my last letters, my dear Lucie, in which I always entreat you to have courage, courage. The whole of France must learn that I am a victim and not a culprit.

A traitor! At the mere word, my blood rushes to my brain, my whole being trembles with rage and indignation. A traitor! the basest of scoundrels! Ah, no! I must live, I must conquer my sufferings, that I may witness the day of triumph when my innocence shall be fully recognised!

Wednesday, June 5, 1895.

How long the hours are! No more paper on which to write, to work, in spite of my repeated requests for the last three weeks; nothing to read; no means of escaping from my thoughts.

No news of my family for three months and a half.

Friday, June 7, 1895.

I have just received some paper and some reviews.

It is pouring in torrents to-day.

My brain pains me terribly as soon as I begin to think.

Sunday, June 9, 1895.

My heart is so bruised that everything wounds me. Death would be a deliverance; but I must not think of that.

Still no news of my dear ones.

Five Years of My Life

Wednesday, June 12, 1895.

At last I have received letters from my wife and family. They are some that arrived at the end of March; they have most certainly been sent back to France. It takes more than three months, then, for letters to reach me.

How clearly I can see sorrow, the overwhelming sorrow of them all, in every line. I reproach myself more than ever for writing, when first I came here, those harrowing letters to my wife. I should have borne my sufferings alone, without allowing others, who have troubles enough of their own to bear, to share my cruel torments.

Then there is always this constant, unheard-of, incomprehensible suspicion, which adds still more to the wounds of my already lacerated heart.

When he brought my letters, the commandant of the islands said to me:

"They ask at Paris whether you and your

family have not agreed on a secret correspondence code."

"Search for it," I said. "What else do they think?"

"Oh!" he replied, "they do not appear to believe in your innocence."

"Ah! I hope to live long enough to answer all the infamous calumnies which have sprung from the imagination of people blinded by hate, passion, and prejudice."

So, for all of us, the light must be complete and dazzling, not only concerning my condemnation, but also in reference to everything that has been said and done since.

I have received my kitchen utensils, and, for the first time, canned food from Cayenne. Material life is indifferent to me, but in sustaining it with care I shall be better able to keep up my strength.

The convict labourers are to come in a few days to do some work on the island. So I am locked in my hut for fear that I shall communicate with them. Oh, the repulsiveness of mankind!

Here I interrupt my diary to give a few extracts from my wife's letters, which I received June 12. These letters had really reached Cayenne at the end of March, and had then been sent back to France to be read at the Colonial Ministry, as well as at the Ministry of War. Later on, my wife was told that she would have to deposit at the Colonial Ministry, on the 25th of each month, the letters which she wished forwarded to me. She was forbidden to write about my case or of events relating to it, and which were well known, even in public. Her letters were read, studied, passed through many hands, and often did not reach me at all. Of course they could have no feature of privacy. At last, on account of the surveillance of which she was the object, she had to refrain from mentioning any of the efforts made to discover the truth, for fear that those who were interested in our ruin and in smothering the facts should take advantage of them.

"PARIS,

"*February* 23, 1895.

"MY DEAR ALFRED,

"I was deeply moved when I learned, directly after I returned, that you had left the Île de Ré. You were very far from me, it is true, and yet I could see you every week, and I waited longingly for those meetings. I read your fearful sufferings in your eyes, and dreamed only of lessening them for you a little. Now I have only a single hope, one desire, to come to join you and exhort you to patience, and, by dint of my affection and tenderness, to make you await calmly the hour of rehabilitation. This is now the final stage of your sufferings; I hope, at least, that on the ship, during the long voyage, you met humane persons, touched at the spectacle of an innocent man and a martyr. . . .

"Not a second passes, my adored husband, without my thoughts being with you. My days and nights drag on in continual

anxiety for your health and your strength of will. Only think! I am in total ignorance about you, and shall know nothing until you arrive! . . ."

"PARIS,
"*February* 26, 1895.

"Day and night I think of you, I share your sufferings; my anxiety is dreadful at feeling that you are going so far away, sailing on the sea, where storms may come to add to your moral torture by physical suffering. What fatality is it that we should be so cruelly tried?

"I am filled with yearning to be near you, and, by my affection and tenderness, to be able to calm your immense sorrow a little. I have asked the Colonial Minister for permission to rejoin you, and as the law allows the wives and children of those who are transported to accompany them, I do not see what objection there can be urged to this. So I am waiting for the answer with feverish impatience. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*February* 28, 1895.

"I cannot tell you the sadness and the grief I feel while you are going farther and farther away; my days pass in anxious thoughts, my nights in frightful dreams; only the children, with their pretty ways and the pure innocence of their souls, succeed in reminding me of the one compelling duty I must fulfil, and that I have no right to give way; so I gather strength and put my whole heart into bringing them up as you always desired, following your good counsels, and endeavouring to make them noble in heart, so that, when you come back, you shall find your children worthy of their father, and as you would have moulded them."

"PARIS,
"*March* 5, 1895.

"With my last letter I forwarded to you a packet of reviews of every kind that may interest you, and which will help you, as far

as possible, to make the hours a little less long while waiting for the good tidings of the discovery of the guilty one.

"Provided, O God! that the existence awaiting you there be not too terrible, that you may not be deprived of what is absolutely necessary, and that you may be able to endure the rigorous treatment inflicted on you. . . .

"Since your departure from France my suffering is doubled; nothing can equal the fearful anxiety which tortures me. I should be a thousand times less wretched if I could be with you. I should at least know how you are, the state of your health and your energy, and on this score my anxiety would be at rest.

"LUCIE."

CONTINUATION OF MY DIARY

Saturday, June 15, 1895.

The whole week I have been locked up in my hut on account of the presence of the

convicts who came to work at the warders' quarters.

Nothing but suffering.

Wednesday, June 19, 1895.

Dry heat; the rainy season is near its end. I am covered with sores from the stings of mosquitoes and other insects. But all this is nothing! What are my physical sufferings as compared with the horrible tortures of the soul? Only infinitesimal. It is the aching head and heart which cry aloud with grief. When will the guilty one be discovered, when shall I know at last the truth of this tragic history? Shall I live until then? Sometimes I doubt it, I do so feel my whole being dissolving in terrible despair. And my poor, dear Lucie and my children! No; I will not abandon them. I will cling to my dear ones with all the energy of my being so long as I have a shadow of vitality. I must recover all my honour and all the honour of my children.

Saturday, June 22, 11 P.M.

Impossible to sleep. I have been shut up since half-past six in the evening, my hut lighted only by the lantern of the guard-room. Besides, I cannot work at English all night, and the few Reviews which reach me are quickly read.

Then all night long there is a constant going and coming in the guard-room, a ceaseless noise of doors roughly opened and then bolted. First the guard is relieved every two hours; besides this, the warder who makes the round comes to sign the book at the guard-room every hour. These constant movements, this rattling of locks, have come to be part of my nightmares.

When will the end come to so painful and undeserved a martyrdom?

Tuesday, June 25, 1895.

Again the convicts have come to work on the island, and I am shut up in my hut.

Friday, June 28, 1895.

Still shut in because the convicts are here.

By sheer force of will and straining my nerves, I succeed in studying English three or four hours a day; but the rest of the time my thoughts are continually going back to the horrible tragedy. It often seems that my heart and brain must burst.

Saturday, June 29, 1895.

I have just seen the mail boat for France sailing by. How the thought of France thrills through my soul! To think that my country, to which I had devoted all my strength and all my intelligence, can believe me to be so vile! Ah! my burden is sometimes too heavy for human shoulders to bear.

Thursday, July 4, 1895.

I have not had strength enough to write for some days past; I have been so agitated by receiving, at last, after long days of

waiting, fairly recent letters from my wife and the entire family. The latest letters were dated the 25th of May. The authorities have at last notified my family that all letters must pass through the hands of the officials.

There is nothing new; the guilty man has not been discovered. I suffer on account of my family's distress, as if it were all my own. I do not speak of my thousand and one daily miseries, which are like so many wounds to a lacerated heart.

But I will not give up; I must communicate my own energy to my wife; I will succeed in vindicating the honour of my name and my children's.

Here are a few extracts from the letters which came recently from my wife.

"PARIS,
"*March* 25, 1895.

"I hope this letter will find you in good health. . . . . For my part, I am waiting

with the greatest impatience for news of your arrival. It cannot be long delayed, for it is three weeks since you sailed. What a Calvary you have endured, and what awful moments you still must pass before we discover the truth!

Mathieu cannot make up his mind to leave me. I know how much you always loved him, and how you admire his noble character.

"PARIS,
"*March* 27, 1895.

"My heart is rent asunder when I think of your sufferings and of your grief, alone and in exile, having not one soul near that can uphold you and give you hope and courage. I long so much to be near you, to share your grief and to assuage it a little by my presence. I assure you my thoughts are much oftener in the Îles de Salut than here; I picture to myself that I am there with you, I try to look upon you in that forlorn island and to imagine to myself your life. . . . .

"PARIS,
"*April* 6, 1895.

"I read this morning, not without emotion, the story of your arrival at the Îsles du Salut; according to the newspapers, the Île du Diable has been allotted to you alone. But although the news of your arrival has reached France, I have so far received absolutely nothing from you. I cannot tell you what my sufferings are, thus separated completely from the husband whom I so love, totally deprived of news, and not knowing how you are bearing up.

"Your wonderful self-sacrifice, your heroic courage, and the energy of your soul give us strength to persevere in the task which is incumbent on us; that we shall accomplish it successfully I feel certain. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*April* 12, 1895.

"Still no news from you; it is terrible. It will soon be two months since I last saw

you, and there has been nothing, absolutely nothing. Not a line of your hand-writing, to bring me something of yourself. It is very hard ! . . .

"It is terrible to think of your misery; my heart, my whole being, is tortured by the thought of it. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*April* 21, 1895.

"The 21st April ! This date reminds me of pleasant memories. Five years ago to-day we were happy ; four years and a half of a perfectly contented and peaceful existence had gone by and we had known only happiness. Then all at once the thunderbolt fell and shattered all our hopes. I often told you, did I not, that I had nothing to wish for, that I possessed all ? And now I can only ask one boon. It is a supplication, a constant prayer that I address to God, that this year may bring our happiness back to us, that our dearly prized honour, which has been taken away from us, may be restored,

and that you may find once more, joy, happiness, and strength of health. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*April* 24, 1895.

"So far I have received nothing from you, and I am broken-hearted. Each morning I hope and wait. Each evening I lie down filled with the same disappointment. Ah! my poor heart, how it is tortured. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*April* 25, 1895.

". . . I have just passed the most terrible day of my life. A newspaper has announced that you were ill. The torments I endured after reading this are beyond all description. To feel that you were far away, ill and alone, not to have even the comfort of nursing you and of doing you good, it was atrocious! My heart, my whole being, gave me acute pain. I, who had entreated you to live, who had but one hope, that of seeing you happy

again and of contributing to your happiness —every gloomy idea passed through my head. Distracted as I was, I appealed to the Ministry of the Colonies. The news was false. . . . When will your first letter reach me? I wait for it with childish impatience. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*May* 5, 1895.

"The letter I am expecting from you with such great impatience ever since your arrival has not yet come. Ever since I have known that the French mail arrived a fortnight ago (the 23rd April), my heart beats each time the postman comes, and each time I meet with disappointment. It is the same thing as regards the permission I have asked for to join you; the Minister of the Colonies has not yet answered my two successive applications, which date from the month of February. What am I to do, what to think?

"Your little Pierre every morning lisps an

ardent prayer for your prompt return. The poor little fellow is accustomed to have everything in life smile on him; he does not understand why his wishes are not heard; he repeats his prayer twice, for fear that he has not said it well enough. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*May* 9, 1895.

"At last I have received a letter from you. I cannot tell you what joy I felt, and how my heart beat at seeing your dear handwriting, and reading the first lines which have reached me from you since your arrival, two months ago. I share you suffering and your anguish. . . .

"LUCIE."

CONTINUATION OF MY DIARY

Saturday, July 6, 1895.

Still, still this atrocious life of suspicion, of continual surveillance, of a thousand daily pin-pricks! My blood boils with anger and

indignation, and I am obliged, for my own sake, for the sake of my dignity, to conceal my feelings.

Sunday, July 7, 1895.

The convicts have finished their work at last. So yesterday and to-day I have washed my towels, cleaned my dishes with hot water, and mended my linen, which was in a pitiable state.

Wednesday, July 10, 1895.

Every kind of vexation is again inflicted on me. I am no longer allowed to walk around my hut; I cannot sit down behind it, in front of the sea—the only place where it was a little cool and where there was shade. Finally, I am put on convict's diet, that is to say, I am deprived of coffee and sugar; a ration of bread of inferior quality is given me every day, and twice a week half a pound of meat; the other days, preserved beef or tinned bacon. Possibly this new regimen will also bring with it the

suppression of the canned provisions I received from Cayenne.

I shall no longer leave my hut; I shall live on bread and water; let this state of things last as long as it may.

Friday, June 12, 1895.

It seems that it is not the convicts' rations which are given me, but special rations for myself. Nor does this new arrangement entail the suppression of the tinned provisions which I receive from Cayenne.

But all this amounts to little.

It is my nerves, my brain, my heart that suffer! I am debarred from going to sit in the only place where there was a little shade in the day, where the sea-breeze fanned my face, and seemed to echo the vibrations of my soul.

Same day; evening.

I have just received my tinned provisions from Cayenne. But what does the food of the body matter? the martyrdom they make

me endure is so fearful. It is their duty to guard me, to prevent my escaping—if so be that I have ever shown the intention, for the only thing I seek and wish is the restoration of my honour—but I am followed everywhere; all I do is closely watched and a subject of suspicion. When I walk too fast, they say I am tiring out the guard, who must accompany me; and when I answer that I will no longer leave my hut, they threaten to punish me! But the day of light will end by coming!

Sunday, July 14, 1895.*

I have gazed at the tricolour flag floating everywhere on the island, the flag I have served with honour and loyalty. My grief is so great that my pen falls from my fingers; there are feelings that cannot be expressed in words.

* This is the Fête day of the Republic, the French national holiday.

Five Years of My Life

Tuesday, July 16, 1895.

The heat is becoming terrible. The part of the island reserved to me is completely bare. The cocoa-palms grow only in the other portion.

I pass the greater part of my days in my hut. And nothing to read! Last month's Reviews have not reached me.

During this time, what is becoming of my wife and children?

And this silence of the tomb ever around me!

Saturday, July 20, 1895.

The days pass by terribly monotonously, and I am ever anxiously waiting for a better morrow.

My sole occupation is to work a little at English.

This is the tomb, to which is added the pain of having a living heart.

Torrents of rain in the afternoon, followed by a hot, stifling mist. I am very feverish.

Sunday, July 21, 1895.

I had fever all last night, with a constant inclination to vomit. The guards seem to be as much depressed as myself by the climate.

Tuesday, July 23, 1895.

Again a bad night. Rheumatic, or rather nervous pains, constantly shifting about, sometimes between my ribs, and sometimes across my shoulders. But I shall struggle also against my body; I wish to live and see the end.

Wednesday, July 24, 1895.

Spleen takes hold of me also. I never see a pleasant face; I can never open my mouth to speak to any human being; night and day I must suppress heart and brain in an eternal silence.

Sunday, July 28, 1895.

The mail from France has just come. But my letters go first to Cayenne, and then

come back here, although they have already been read and countersigned in France.

Monday, July 29, 1895.

Always the same thing, alas! Days and nights pass in struggling with myself, in trying to quench the boiling of my brain, in stifling my heart's impatience, in rising above all the wretchedness of my life.

Evening.

A heavy, stifling day, irritating to the nerves in the highest degree. My nerves are stretched like violin strings. It is the dry season, and may last until January. Let us hope that all will be over by that time.

Tuesday, July 30, 1895.

A warder has just left, worn out by the fevers of the place. This is the second man who has been forced to leave since I have been here. I am sorry he is gone, for he was an honest man, fulfilling strictly the

duties confided to him, but loyally, with tact and moderation.

Wednesday, July 31, 1895.

All last night I dreamed of you, my dear Lucie, and of our children. I wait with feverish impatience for the mail that is coming from Cayenne. I hope it will bring me my letters. Can the news be good? Are they at last on the track of the wretch who committed the infamous deed?

Thursday, August 1; *noon.*

The mail coming from Cayenne arrived this morning at a quarter past seven.

Does it bring any letters, and what news? Up to now I have received nothing.

Half-past four o'clock.

Still nothing. Terrible hours of waiting.

Nine o'clock in the evening.

Nothing has come. What a bitter disappointment!

Five Years of My Life

Friday, August 2, 1895. *Morning.*

What a terrible night I have passed! And I must struggle on, always and ever. I have sometimes a mad desire to sob, sob aloud, my sorrow is so overwhelming; but I must swallow my tears; I should be ashamed of my weakness before the warders who guard me night and day.

Not even for an instant am I alone with my grief.

These shocks wear me out, and to-day I am broken in body and soul. But I am going to write to Lucie, hiding my condition from her, to tell her to have courage. Our children must enter life holding their heads high and proudly, whatever happens to me.

Seven o'clock; evening

My letters had come; they have only now brought them to me. No new developments as yet. But I shall have the necessary patience; the machinations of which I am

the victim must be traced to their source. It must be so.

I must bear my sufferings till then!

Here are a few extracts from my wife's letters, which I received the 2nd August, in the evening.

"PARIS,
"*June* 6, 1895.

"I am waiting with the keenest anxiety for some kind letters from you, to reassure me about your health, of which I hope you are taking care. The mail steamer arrived on May 23; to-day is the 6th of June, and your letters have not yet reached me. Each time the postman comes gives me a new hope, doomed to disappointment. My thoughts are all for you, my life for you. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*June* 7, 1895.

"While writing you, I have just been interrupted by the arrival of your dear letters. . . . From your energy I imbibe

renewed strength. It is you who sustain me. . . . On the other hand, if I can live thus separated from you and tortured by cruel suffering, it is because my faith is boundless and my confidence in the future absolute. But I suffer so much from being separated from you that I have made another appeal to go and share your exile. I shall at least have the happiness of living the same life as you, of being near you, and showing you how much I love you.

"I pass hours in reading and re-reading your dear letters; they are my consolation while waiting for the happiness of meeting you again. . . .

"LUCIE."

When I realised the rigours of my life at the Îles du Salut, I had no illusion as to the answer which would be given to my wife's requests to be permitted to come and join me. I knew they would be steadfastly refused.

Five Years of My Life

CONTINUATION OF MY DIARY

Saturday, August 3, 1895.

I did not close my eyes all night. All these emotions exhaust me.

To see so many sorows accumulated so unjustly round one, and to be unable to do anything to mitigate them!

Sunday, August 4, 1895.

I have just passed two hours, from half-past five to half-past seven, in washing my clothes, towels, and dishes. The work fatigues me greatly, but it does me good all the same. Ah! I struggle as much as I can against the climate and against my tortures. For, before giving up, I must know that my honour has been restored.

But how long the days and nights are!

I have received no Reviews for two months; I have nothing to read.

I never open my mouth; I am more silent than a Trappist.*

I sent to Cayenne to ask for a box of carpenter's tools, that I might occupy myself a little in manual labour. This has been refused me. Why? Another riddle which I will not try to solve. For nine months I find myself face to face with so many enigmas which upset my reason, that I prefer to rest my weary brain and live unconsciously.

Monday, August 5, 1895.

The heat is becoming terrific, and I feel utterly crushed and exhausted by these nine months of frightful martyrdom that I have endured.

Saturday, August 10, 1895.

I do not know how far I can go, my heart and brain make me suffer so much, and this lamentable tragedy disturbs my reason so

* The Trappists are an order of monks who have taken a vow of strict silence.—J. M.

much. All my faith in human justice, honesty, and righteousness have so completely crumbled in face of the horrible facts!

If, then, I succumb, and these lines ever reach you, my dear Lucie, I beg you to believe that I have done all that was humanly possible to bear up so long. . . .

Be courageous and strong; may our children become your comfort; may they inspire you with the strength to do your duty.

When a man's conscience assures him that he has at all times and in all places done his duty, he can bear himself with head erect and claim his birthright, which is honour.

Monday, September 2, 1895.

For a long time I have added nothing to my diary.

What is the use of it? I struggle to live, no matter how atrocious my situation, how lacerated my heart, because I wish, in the

midst of my cherished ones, to witness that day when our honour shall be restored to us.

Let us hope the time will soon come. I am so utterly weary.

Yesterday I had a fainting fit; my heart all at once seemed to cease to beat, and I felt myself unconsciously drifting away without pain. What it was exactly I am not able to explain.

I am waiting for my letters.

Friday, September 6, 1895.

Still I have no letters. Are there words to express the torture of such suspense? Happy are the dead!

And to be compelled to live on, so long as the heart shall beat!

Saturday, September 7, 1895.

My letters have this moment come. The guilty one has not yet been discovered.

A few extracts from my wife's letters, received at this time:

"PARIS,
"*July* 8, 1895.

"Your letters of May and of June 3 have reached me. They have done me immense good. I seem to hear you speak, your dear voice is ringing in my ears; something of yourself had come to me at last, your noble and beautiful thoughts were reflected in my mind. To say that I did not weep when I received letters so impatiently waited for would be a falsehood; but I saw with intense happiness that you had become master of yourself again; your courage gives us all strength. Your example fortifies us in the task that we have set ourselves. . . .

"I was touched to the depths of my soul by the letter you wrote to our Pierre; he was enchanted, and his child's face lighted up when I read your lines to him; he knows them by heart. When he speaks of you he is all aflame."

"PARIS,
"*July* 10, 1895.

"I come again to urge courage and patience to you; with one unflagging purpose we shall overcome all difficulties and soon grasp the key of the lamentable mystery of which we are the unhappy victims. It is my aim, my sole desire and fixed idea, the idea of Mathieu, of all of us, to give you the supreme happiness of beholding your innocence blazoned forth to the world in the light of day. I am resolved to succeed in unmasking those who have been guilty of so unexampled and monstrous an iniquity. If we were not ourselves the victims of this horrible crime, I would not admit that there could exist men so base, cowardly, and perverse as to snatch from a family its pride in its stainless name, and to allow an officer without reproach to be condemned without their consciences dragging from them at the final moment a cry of confession.

"LUCIE."

Five Years of My Life

CONTINUATION OF MY DIARY

September 22, 1895.

I had palpitation of the heart all last night. Consequently I am very tired this morning.

Truly the mind is in a sea of perplexity in face of such deeds.

Condemned on the sole evidence of handwriting, it will soon be a year since I asked for justice; and the justice I demand is not a dispute about the handwriting, but the search for and discovery of the wretch who wrote the infamous letter. The Government possesses every means for such a search. We are not in the presence of a commonplace crime, of which we know neither the particulars nor the ramifications. The sources in this case are known, and thus the truth can be discovered whenever they choose to search for it.

However, the means matters nothing to me. What my mind and reason stand

bewildered before is that they have not as yet succeeded in clearing up this horrible tragedy.

Ah! the justice which I ask I must have, for my children and my family; and no matter how horrible my sufferings may be, I shall demand it with my last breath.

But what a life for a man who esteemed no one's integrity to be above his own!

Death certainly would have been a blessing and I have not even the right to think of it!

September 27, 1895.

Such a martyrdom ends by going beyond the bounds of human strength. It renews each day the poignancy of the agony. It compels an innocent man to go down living into the tomb.

Ah! I leave their own consciences to judge the men who have condemned me on the sole evidence of a suspected handwriting, without any tangible proofs, without

witnesses, without a motive to make so infamous an act conceivable.

If even, after my condemnation, as they promised me in the name of the Minister of War, they had resolutely and actively followed up the steps taken to unmask the guilty one!

And then, there is a way, through diplomatic channels!

A government possesses all the machinery necessary to penetrate such a mystery; and to do so is its strict and positive duty.

Oh, humanity with its passions and hatreds, with its moral ugliness!

Oh, men with their own selfish interests alone to guide them! To such, all the rest matters but little!

Justice? it is a good thing when you have the time, when it does not bother you nor injure others!

Sometimes I am so disheartened, so worn out, that I long to stretch myself out, let myself go, and thus passively finish with life. I cannot do anything active to that end; for I have not, I shall never have, that right.

My misery is becoming unbearable.

There must be an end to all this. My wife must make her voice heard—the voice of the innocent ones crying out for justice.

If I had only my own life to struggle for I should certainly not struggle any longer; but it is for honour that I live, and I shall struggle inch by inch to the end.

Bodily pains are nothing, the heart-ache is the one terrible thing.

September 29, 1895.

I had violent palpitations of the heart this morning. I was suffocating. The machine struggles; how long has it still to run?

Last night also I had a fearful nightmare, in which I called out to you for help, my poor, dear Lucie.

Ah! if there were only myself, my disgust for men and things is so deep that I should look forward only to the great rest, to eternal repose.

October 1, 1895.

I no longer know how to write down my feelings; the hours seem centuries to me.

October 5, 1895.

I have received letters from home. Still nothing done! From all these letters there rises such a cry of suffering that my whole being is shaken to its depths.

I have just written the following letter to the President of the Republic:

"Accused and then found guilty on the sole evidence of handwriting, of the most infamous crime which a soldier can commit, I have declared, and I declare once again, that I did not write the letter which was imputed to me, and that I have never forfeited my honour.

"For a year I have been struggling alone, with a clear conscience, against the most terrible calamity which can befall a man.

"I do not speak of physical sufferings;

they are nothing; the sorrows of the heart are everything.

"To suffer thus is dreadful in itself, but to feel those who are dear to me suffering with me is horrible. It is the agony of a whole family, expiating an abominable crime which I never committed.

"I do not beg for pardon, or favours, or compassion; I only ask, I beg, that light full and complete may be shed upon this machination of which my family and I are the unhappy and miserable victims.

"If I have lived on, M. le President, and if I still continue to live, it is because the sacred duty which I have to fulfil towards my family fills my soul and governs it; otherwise I should long since have succumbed under a burden too heavy for human strength to bear.

"In the name of my honour, torn from me by an appalling error, in the name of my wife, in the name of my children—oh! M. le President, at this last thought alone my father's heart, as a Frenchman and an

honest man, cries out in its anguish!—I ask justice from you; and this justice, which I beg of you with all my soul, with all the strength of my heart, with hands joined in supreme prayer, is to probe the mystery of this tragic history, and thus to put an end to the martyrdom of a soldier and of a family to whom their honour is their all."

I am writing also to Lucie to act with energy and resolution, for this cruelty will end by prostrating us all.

They tell me that I think more of the sufferings of others than of my own. Ah, yes, assuredly; for if I were alone in the world, if I allowed myself to think only of myself, long since the tomb would have closed over me.

It is the one thought of Lucie and my children that gives me strength.

Ah, my darling children, to die is of little matter to me. But before I die, I wish to know that our name has been cleared from this stain.

A few extracts from my wife's letters received by me in October :

"PARIS,
"*August* 4, 1895.

"I have not the patience to wait for your letters before writing you ; I feel the need of communing a little with you, to draw near to your noble soul, so tried, and to acquire from you new stores of strength and courage."

"PARIS,
"*August* 12, 1895.

"At last I have received your letters ; I devour them, read and re-read them with a never-satisfied greediness.

"When will my solicitude and affection efface from your mind the remembrance of the atrocious days of this direful year, which has left in our hearts so deep a wound ? I wish I possessed triple the power to hasten the time so anxiously awaited and to show to the whole world that we are pure, in spite of the mud of infamy they have thrown in our faces. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*August* 19, 1895.

"When I endeavour to lessen a little the nervous anxiety of waiting and diminish the fever of my impatience, to get back my calm and renew my strength, I come to you.

"What breaks my heart is to think that you are alone, far from all those who love you with all their hearts, and that you are a prey to this awful suspense, torturing your mind to clear up the mystery, while your poor heart and your upright conscience cannot realise the existence of such infamy.

"LUCIE."

CONTINUATION OF MY DIARY

October 6, 1895.

Awful heat. The hours are leaden.

October 14, 1895.

Violent wind. Impossible to go out. The day is of terrible length.

Five Years of My Life

October 26, 1895.

I no longer know how I live. My brain is crushed. Ah! to say that I do not suffer beyond all expression, that often I do not long for eternal rest, that this struggle between my deep disgust for men and things and my duty is not terrible—to say this would be a lie.

But whenever I feel that I am giving way, in my long nights or in my solitary days; whenever my mind, enfeebled by so many shocks, prompts me to ask how, after a life of toil and honour, it is possible that I should have come to such a pass as this; when I feel tempted to shut my eyes that I may hear and think and suffer no more, then it is that I summon all my fortitude, exclaiming to myself: "You are not alone, you are a father, you must stand up for the good name of your wife and children." And I begin again with new strength, to fall back, alas! a little later, and then begin again.

This is my daily life.

October 30, 1895.

Violent heart spasms.

The sultry atmosphere takes away all energy. This is the changeable weather preceding the rainy season, the worst period of the year here in Guiana. Will it finally overthrow me?

Night from November 2–3, 1895.

The mail-boat is in from Cayenne, but there are no letters.

It is impossible to express the keen disappointment one experiences when, after anxiously waiting during a long month for news of dear ones, nothing comes.

But so many sorrows have entered into my soul for more than a year that I can no longer reckon each fresh wound of the heart.

Yet this agitation, with which I should be familiar, since it is renewed so often, has so upset me that, although I rose this morning at half-past five and have walked for at least

six hours to master my nerves, it is impossible for me to sleep.

How much longer will this torment endure?

November 4, 1895.

Terrific heat; over 45° (113° Fahrenheit).

Nothing is so depressing, nothing so exhausts the energy of heart and mind as these long agonising silences, never hearing human speech, seeing no friendly face, nor even one that shows sympathy.

November 7, 1895.

What has become of the letters which have been sent me? Where has the mail stopped? Has it been detained in Paris or at Cayenne? These are the disquieting questions which I ask myself every hour of the day.

I constantly wonder if I am awake or if I dream, so incredible, unimaginable, is everything which has befallen me during the year.

To have left my native land, Alsace; to have given up an independent situation among my own people; to have served my country with my whole soul, only to find myself one fine day accused and then condemned for a crime as contemptible as it is hateful, on the evidence of the handwriting of a doubtful scrap of paper—is this not enough to demoralise a man for ever?

But I must still struggle against Fate, for the sake of my dear Lucie and my children.

November 9, 1895.

This is a terribly long day. The first rain having commenced, I am obliged to shut myself in my hut. Nothing to read. The books announced in the letter of August have not yet reached me.

November 15, 1895.

I have at last received my letters. The guilty one is not yet discovered.

I shall hold out to the end of my strength,

which is declining daily: it is a ceaseless struggle to be able to withstand complete isolation, this perpetual silence, in a climate which destroys all energy, and having nothing to do and nothing to read, ever alone with my sad thoughts.

A few extracts from my wife's letters, which I received on November 15, 1895:

"PARIS,
"*September* 5, 1895.

"What long hours and weary days we have passed since the hour when our frightful misfortune struck us down at a blow! Let us hope that we have at last climbed up the steepest part of our Calvary; that we have passed through the bitterest of our anguish. It is in our conscience alone that we have found the strength to endure the agony of our martyrdom. God, who has so sorely tried us, will give us the strength to fulfil our duty to the end. . . . I understand your heartache and share it; like you, there

are moments when I lose all patience, finding the time so long and the hours of waiting too cruel. But then I think of you, of the noble example of courage which you show me, and I draw strength from your love. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*September* 25, 1895.

"This is the last letter I write you by this mail. I ardently hope that it may find you in good health and still strong and courageous. I cannot come to join you; I have not yet obtained permission. For me the waiting is cruel, and it is one more bitter disappointment to add to so many others. . . .

"LUCIE."

At the foot of this letter were the following lines from my brother Mathieu :—

"I have received your kind letter, my dear brother, and it is a great consolation and a great comfort to me to know you are so strong and courageous. It is not 'hope'

that I say to you, but 'have faith, have confidence'; it is impossible that the innocent should suffer for the guilty.

"There is no day that I am not with you in mind and in heart.

"MATHIEU."

CONTINUATION OF MY DIARY

November 30, 1895.

I will not speak of my daily petty annoyances, for I despise them. It only needs for me to ask the chief warder for any insignificant thing of common necessity to have my request abruptly and instantly refused. Accordingly, I never repeat a request, preferring to go without everything rather than humiliate myself.

But my reason will end by giving way under this inconceivable treatment.

December 3, 1895.

I have not yet received the mail of the month of October. This is a gloomy day,

with ceaseless rain. My head is bursting, my heart is broken.

The air is thick and heavy, the sky black as ink. A genuine day of death and burial.

How often there recurs to my mind that exclamation of Schopenhauer, at the spectacle of human iniquity:

"If God created the world, I would not be God."

The mail from Cayenne has come, it seems, but has not brought my letters. How many more sorrows?

Nothing to read, no avenue of escape from my thoughts.

Neither books nor Reviews come to me any more.

I walk in the daytime until my strength is gone, to calm my brain and exhaust my nerves.

December 5, 1895.

In truth, I ask myself, what sort of consciences have people nowadays? To think there are men who call themselves honest,

like the man Bertillon, who had dared to swear without any restriction that, since the handwriting of that infamous letter slightly resembles mine, therefore only I could have penned it! As to moral or other proofs, they were of little matter to such as he.

If there remains any remnant of heart in such men, I hope that on the day when the real culprit shall be unmasked they will lodge a pistol ball in their heads, to expiate the misery they have inflicted on an entire family.

December 7, 1895.

How often I feel it beyond my power to support this life of constant suspicion and uninterrupted watching by day and by night, caged like a wild beast and treated like the vilest of criminals.

December 8, 1895.

I have a violent attack of neuralgia in the head, which increases every day and makes me suffer more and more. What a martyrdom of every hour, every minute!

And always this silence of the tomb, with never the sound of a human voice.

A word of sympathy, a friendly look, may minister a soothing balm to cruel wounds and assuage for a time the acutest grief. Here there is nothing.

December 9, 1897.

Never any letters. They have probably been detained at Cayenne, where they lie about for a fortnight. The mail-boat coming from France passed here before my eyes, on November 29, and the letters must have been at Cayenne ever since.

The same day; 6 o'clock evening.

The second post received from Cayenne since the arrival of the last mail from France came in to-day at one o'clock. Does it this time bring me my letters? and what is the news?

December 11, 6 *o'clock evening.*

No letters! My heart is furrowed and torn!

December 12, 1895; *morning.*

My letters really did not arrive. Where have they stopped? I have requested them to telegraph to Cayenne and find out.

Same day; evening.

My letters were stopped in France! My heart makes me suffer as if they were tearing it apart with a dagger.

Oh, the ceaseless moaning of the sea! What an echo to my sorrowing soul!

Such wild, fierce anger sometimes fills my heart against all human iniquity, that I could wish to tear my flesh, so as to forget, in physical pain, this horrible mental torture.

December 13, 1895.

They will certainly end by killing me through repeated sufferings, or by forcing me to commit suicide to escape from insanity. The opprobrium of my death will be on the Commandant du Paty, Bertillon, and all those who have had a share in this iniquity.

Each night I dream of my wife and children. But what fearful awakenings! When I open my eyes and find myself in this wretched hut, I have a moment of such anguish that I could close my eyes for ever, never to see or think again.

Evening.

I have violent heart-spasms, with a frequent feeling of suffocation.

December 14, 1895.

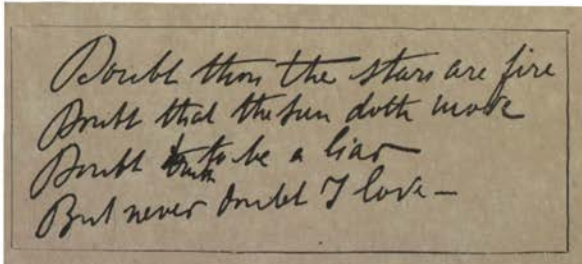
I ask for the bath which I have been authorised to take by order of the doctor. No, is the answer the chief warder sends. A few minutes later he goes and takes one himself. I do not know why I should abase myself to ask anything whatever of him. Until now I have repeated none of my requests ; and from now on I shall make no new ones.

December 16, 1895.

From ten o'clock to three, the hours are terrible, and I have nothing to distract my miserable thoughts.

December 18, 1895.

Dear little Pierre! dear little Jeanne! dear Lucie—how well I see you in my mind's



FACSIMILE OF A QUOTATION FROM HAMLET WRITTEN BY CAPTAIN DREYFUS IN HIS DIARY

eye! How the remembrance of you all nerves me to submit to every ill!

December 20, 1895.

No affront is spared me. When I receive my linen, which is washed at the Ile Royale, they unfold it, search through it in every possible way, and then toss it to me as to some vile creature. Every time I look upon the ocean there comes back to me the remembrance of the sweet and happy

moments I have passed upon its shores, with my wife and children. I see myself taking my little Pierre along the beach, where he plays and gambols, while I dream of a happy future for him.

Then my present situation comes back to me, the disgrace cast upon my name and upon that of my children; my eyes grow dim, the blood rushes to my head, my heart throbs as if it were about to break; indignation fills my whole being. The light must dispel this darkness, the truth must be discovered, no matter what our sufferings may be!

December 22, 1895.

Still no news from my dear ones! The silence of the grave! What a fearful night I have just passed! The goings and comings of the warders, the lights that pass and repass add to my nightmares.

December 25, 1895.

Alas! always the same thing. No letters. The English mail passed two days ago.

My letters cannot have arrived, for otherwise I think they would have sent them to me. What to think! what to believe!

The rain falls all the time.

During a lighter spell, I went out to stretch myself a little. A few rain-drops only were falling. The chief-warder came up and said to the guard accompanying me: "You must not stay out when it rains." Whence could emanate such instructions? But I disdained to reply, ignoring all these petty meannesses.

Night, December 26-27, 1895.

Impossible to sleep.

In what nightmare have I lived for nearly fifteen months, and when will it cease?

December 28, 1895.

Intense weariness! My brain is crushed. What is happening? Why have the letters of the month of October not reached me?

Oh, my Lucie, if you read these lines, if I succumb to this anguish, you will be able to imagine all I have suffered!

In the frequent moments when my disgust for all around me makes my senses reel, three names, which I murmur low, reawaken my energy and ever give me new strength—Lucie, Pierre, Jeanne!

Same day; 11 o'clock morning.

I have just seen the mail-boat from France passing. But alas! my letters go on first to Cayenne. At any rate, I hope the first post from Cayenne will bring them to me, that I shall at last have news of home, that I shall know if the riddle of this monstrous affair has been solved, and if I may begin to see an end to this torture.

Sunday, December 29, 1895.

What happy days I used to pass on Sundays, in the midst of my family, playing with my children!

Five Years of My Life

My little Pierre is now nearly five years old. He is almost a big boy. I used to wait with impatience for the time to come when I could take him with me and talk with him; instruct his young mind, and instil within him the love of beauty and truth; and thus develop in him so lofty a soul that the seamy side of life could not defile it. Where are those dreams now?—and that eternal "Why?"

December 30, 1895.

My blood burns and fever devours me. When will all this end?

Same day; evening.

My nerves trouble me so that I am afraid to lie down. This unbroken silence, with no news of my dear ones for three months, with nothing to read, crushes and overwhelms me.

I must rally all my strength to resist always and yet again; I must murmur low those

three words which are my talisman : Lucie, Pierre, Jeanne !

December 31, 1895.

What a frightful night ! Strange dreams, absurd nightmares, followed by copious perspiration.

To-day, at dawn, I saw the arrival of the boat from Cayenne. Ever since, I have been in a strange state of anxiety, asking myself each moment if at last I am to have news from home.

And my heart beats wildly in the anguish of this suspense.

January 1, 1896.

At last, yesterday evening, I received my letters of October and November. Still no progress ; the truth is not yet discovered.

But, also, what grief have I caused Lucie by my last letters ; how I torture her by my impatience; and yet hers is as great as my own.

Five Years of My Life

A few extracts from my wife's letters received by me on January 1, 1896:

"PARIS,
"*October* 10, 1895.

"This mail, my dear husband, has brought only a single letter from you—that which you wrote me on August 5 has not reached me. The dear lines written by your hand, the only sign I have of your existence, still comfort me; your courage revives my own; your energy gives me strength to continue the struggle. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*October* 15, 1895.

"This date recalls such painful remembrances to me that I cannot help turning to you for a moment. It makes me feel better, and seems to be doing you some good also. I no longer wish to speak of the calamitous days we have endured; each of us suffering far away from the other; it is best to think of all this no more; the wound is yet bleeding, and it is useless to make it deeper still

But I want to tell you how full of confidence and hope we are, and that our strenuous determination will triumph over all obstacles. We shall certainly detect and expose the wretched men who have committed this crime. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*October* 25, 1895.

"The months are long when one suffers so cruelly; they all resemble each other in their monotony and sadness. Here is another mail; like those that went before, it will bring you words of hope and the echo of our boundless affection. . . .

"It is tedious and mournful to wait; but count on us. Your patience will not be in vain."

"PARIS,
"*November* 10, 1895.

"I read and re-read the sole letter from you that has reached me by the last mail. I received it only this morning. It is very brief, but I am only too happy to have this

door, inadequate echo of your beloved self I doubt not that you often try to chat with me, painful as it may be to you to write, being able to say nothing, and refraining from pouring out your heart for fear of doing me harm.

"Why do they not give me the letters, which are my only consolation? Why do they render yet more painful the situation of two beings already so miserable? Our little Pierre and Jeanne are always good and well-behaved children, kind-hearted, and amiable towards every one. They are both looking well and growing daily taller and stronger. What pleasure it will be for you, when at last we shall have made the truth known, to hold in your arms these dear little beings whom you loved so much, for whom you are suffering, and who, by their affection, will make your life happy and sweet."

"PARIS,

"*November* 25, 1895; *midnight.*

"I have to send my letters to-morrow morning, in order that they may catch the

steamer of December 9, and in spite of the late hour of the night, I cannot help communing with you once again. It is heart-rending for me to send you lifeless lines, commonplace and cold, which are so far from corresponding with my thoughts, my tenderness, and my affection. I cannot express what I feel for you, the sentiment is too deep for me to describe ; but it seems to me that I am now only a part of myself—my soul, my heart are far away in those islands, near you, my well-beloved husband. Hour by hour my thoughts are with you ; it is to me a comfort and a solace.

"LUCIE."

CONTINUATION OF MY DIARY.

January 8, 1896.

Days and nights pass by, depressingly monotonous ; they seem to stretch out into infinite length. By day I await with impatience the coming of the night, hoping to find some rest in sleep. By night I wait,

with impatience no whit lessened, for the day, hoping to calm my nerves with a little exercise.

As I read over and over again the letters brought by the last mail, I realise what a terrible shock to my dear ones my death would be, and that, whatever may happen, it is my duty to fight on to my last breath.

January 12, 1896.

The reply of the President of the Republic to the petition I addressed to him on October 5, 1895 :

"Rejected without commentary."

January 24, 1866.

I have nothing to add ; all hours are the same in the anguish of depressing suspense, waiting for a better morrow.

January 27, 1896.

At last, after long months, I have received a good parcel of books.

By forcing my thoughts to fix themselves on the pages, I succeed in giving my brain a few moments of rest; but alas! I can no longer read for any length of time, I am so utterly broken down.

February 2, 1896.

The mail from Cayenne has arrived. There are no letters for me.

February 12, 1896.

I have only just received my letters. There is still no good news, and I must struggle on and wait. . . .

A few extracts from my wife's letters received on this date:

"PARIS,
"*December* 9, 1895.

"As always, your letters, awaited with such keen anxiety, have caused me deep emotion; a ray of happiness, the only moments of relaxation and joy which I have known during these months of weary

and depressing days. When I read your words, breathing so much energy and determination, I feel that all your being thrills with mine; your strong will inspires me with a strength which seems doubled by the force of your example. . . ."

"PARIS,
December 19, 1896.

"Last year, at this time, we hoped to have nearly reached the end of our Calvary. We had placed all our confience in justice. Then the abominable blunder of the court-martial stupefied us. An entire year of suffering has since elapsed, suffering intensified by the unmerited cruelty of the wound inflicted on us and by the misery of the fate to which you are physically and morally condemned. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*December* 25, 1895.

"I cannot refrain from coming, before the mail leaves, to talk to you again. It is always the same things I say over and over

again; but what does it matter? I speak to you, I come near to you for a moment, and it does me good. . . .

"I have scarcely written of the children, and yet it is they who bind us to life; it is for these poor little ones we endure this intolerable situation, and, thank God, they have no knowledge of it. For them all is joy; they sing and laugh and chatter, and lend life to the house. . . .

"LUCIE."

CONTINUATION OF MY DIARY.

February 28, 1896.

Nothing new to read. Days, nights, are all alike. I never open my mouth, I no longer ask for anything. My speech was limited to asking if my letters had come or not. But I am now forbidden to ask even that; or (which is the same thing) the warders are forbidden to answer the most commonplace questions.

I only wish to live until the day of the discovery of the truth, that I may cry aloud my grief and the torments they inflict on me.

March 3, *six o'clock; evening.*

The mail from Cayenne came this morning at nine o'clock. Have I any letters?

March 4, 1896.

No letters. Alas! alas!

March 8, 1896.

Gloomy days. Everything is forbidden me; I am always alone with my thoughts.

March 9, 1896.

This morning, very early, I saw arriving the launch of the Commandant of the Prison. Was there at last something for me?

No; there was nothing. Only an inspection of my hut.

I no longer live except by a supreme tension of the nerves, while anxiously awaiting the end of these unspeakable torments.

March 12, 1896.

I have at last received my letters. They still contain nothing as to the discovery of the truth.

Extracts from my wife's letters received at this date :

"PARIS,
"*January* 1, 1896.

"This 1st of January is to me longer and more painful than the preceding days. Why? I ask myself. The reasons for suffering are the same. So long as your innocence is not recognised, the oppression of our burden is too crushing for us to take any part in the life around us, or to make any difference between the days, whatever they may be. And yet to-day we seem to labour under a more poignantly sad im-

pression than even before. No doubt this comes from the fact that such holidays, with those who love each other tenderly, are days of greater happiness, while we, who are so wretched, so cruelly wounded, feel more keenly yet the desire of drawing closer together, of affectionately sustaining each other with all our strength."

"PARIS,
"*January* 7, 1896.

"I have just received your letters. As ever, they stir me to the depths of my soul. My emotion is intense when I catch sight of your beloved writing, when I enter into your thoughts. . . .

"Your letters show the same undaunted energy, but I feel your impatience in every line, and I understand it. How could it be otherwise? Left to yourself, in complete isolation, devoured by anxieties, unable to unravel the infamy which has made and is making us so unhappy, torn from your

supremely happy home—the situation is certainly the most tragic that could exist.

"LUCIE."

To the last letter of the month were joined the following lines from my brother :

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Yes ; as you say in your letter of November 20, all the forces of my being are directed towards a single aim—the discovery of the truth—and we shall succeed in the task.

"I can only repeat the same words until the day when I shall be able to say to you : 'The truth is known at last.' But you must live until that day ; you must summon to your aid the strength to hold out against moral and physical torture ; such a task is not above your courage. . . .

"MATHIEU."

Five Years of My Life

CONTINUATION OF MY DIARY.

March 15, 1896, 4 *o'clock* A.M.

Impossible to sleep. My head is horribly fatigued by the absence of physical and intellectual activity. The parcels of books which Lucie announced to me in her last three letters have not yet reached me. Moreover, my brain, is so tired and agitated that it is impossible for me to read for any length of time. However, the few instants in which I can escape from my thoughts bring a slight alleviation.

March 27, 1896.

I have just now received the books which were sent on November 25, 1895.

April 5, 1896.

The mail of the month of February has just come. The guilty person has not yet been unmasked.

Whatever my sufferings may be, light will

come at last. A truce then to fruitless lamentation.

Extracts from my wife's letters received April 5 :

"PARIS,
"*February* 11, 1896.

"I have not yet received your letters of the month of December. I will not complain of the agony which this delay makes me endure, it is useless ; no one can understand how keen are my sufferings caused by this anxiety ; there is nothing more atrocious than to be deprived of the news of one whom I know to be most unhappy, and whose life is a hundred times dearer to me than my own. . . .

"Often, in my calmer hours, I ask myself why we are so tried, for what reason we are forced to endure torments compared with which death would be sweet. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*February* 18, 1896.

"I am still without news from you. Yet I know that the letters you have written me

have been at the Ministry for more than three weeks. I am very impatient to have them and to receive at last my month's consolation. Each delay of the post causes me great anxiety. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*February* 25, 1896.

"At the very instant when I am closing my last letter for the next mail, they bring me your letters. Thanks, with all my heart, for your admirable firmness and for the reassuring words that you have written to me.

"LUCIE."

CONTINUATION OF MY DIARY.

May 5, 1896.

I have nothing more to say. All is alike in its atrociousness. What a horrible life! Not a moment of rest by day or night. Up to these last days the warders remained during the night in their room, and I was awakened only every hour. Now they have to march

about unceasingly; most of them wear wooden shoes!

Here my diary was suspended for more than two months. The days were equally sad and anxious as they crawled along, but I maintained the firm resolution to struggle on and not to allow myself to be beaten down by the tortures inflicted on me. Moreover, in June I had serious attacks of fever which even caused congestion of the brain.

Here are a few extracts from my wife's letters received in May and June, 1896.

"PARIS,
"*February* 29, 1896.

"When I received your December letters, mine were all ready to go; the few lines I was able to add could not express sufficiently the happiness and uplifting that your letters created in me. Your words of affection moved me deeply. When one is very un-

happy, the heart broken, and the soul sad, nothing is sweeter than to feel in the midst of all sorrows a true affection, an intense devotion, whose vital force and strong will imbue one with moral courage to meet disaster with a bold and determined front. . . .

"PARIS,
"*March* 20, 1896.

"You can imagine the anxiety I feel when I see the second fortnight of the month coming; it means for me the departure of the mail. So long as this moment is not near, I hope up to the last minute to be able to tell you of the end of your suffering and of our own sorrow. And then my letters go; they are always devoid of news, and I am heart-broken at the thought of the disappointment you will feel. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*April* 1, 1896.

"I was very sad when the last mail left; up to the last moment I had hoped that I

might send you some comforting word. . . . But, courage! I ask it of you with all the strength and all the supplications of the woman who adores you; in the name of your beloved children, who love you already with all their little hearts, and who will feel infinite gratitude towards you when they shall understand the greatness of the sacrifice you have made for them. As for me, I cannot express my admiration for you. With what tenderness my thoughts accompany you night and day. Your sorrow and grief, and all the feelings which torment you find an echo in my heart. Nothing can console me for not being able to be with you, near at hand to help you. In this frightful misfortune, it would have been a great solace to me to be able to be with you and to make you feel every instant that a loving and devoted soul was watching beside you, always ready to bear your troubles, and to receive the outpourings of your grief and pain. Well, this affection which I so much wished to give you in the midst of your

sorrows is increased yet more, if that is possible, by the anguish inflicted on me because of the distance which separates us, the absence of news from you, the sadness and the isolation of the life to which you are condemned. I must give up describing to you all these impressions of mine; they are too melancholy for you to read, too intense and too deep to confide to this cold and commonplace sheet of paper. . . .

"LUCIE."

CONTINUATION OF MY DIARY.

July 26, 1896.

It is very long since I have added anything to my diary.

My thoughts, my feelings, my sadness are the same; but while my weakness of body and brain grows more pronounced daily, my will remains as strong as ever.

This month I have received no letters from my wife.

Five Years of My Life

August 2, 1896.

At last the mails of May and June have arrived. There is never any of the news I seek. It matters nothing; I shall struggle against my body, against my brain, against my heart, so long as a shadow of strength is left me. Until they have put me under the ground, I must see the end of this dark tragedy.

I hope, for the sake of all of us, that that end may not be long delayed.

Extracts from my wife's letters, received August 2, 1896:

"PARIS,
"*June* 1, 1896.

"I write you, still troubled by your dear, kind letters, which I have just received. At the first moments of seeing your beloved handwriting, when I read the lines which bring me your thoughts—the only news I have for a long month—I am mad with grief, my poor head comprehends nothing

more, and I weep hot tears. Then I summon all my firmness, and I am mortified at having allowed myself to be cast down, and ashamed of my weakness. From your firmness and energy, and from my own strong affection I draw now fresh stores of courage. Nevertheless, these letters of yours do me a world of good; and if emotion crushes me, I yet have the happiness of reading your words and the illusion of listening for a few moments to your dear voice. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*June* 25, 1896.

"I add a few lines to my letters before the mail leaves, to tell you that I am strong, that my purpose shall never be shaken, that I shall succeed in having your honour vindicated; and I beseech you to have with me this firm hope in the future, this faith which makes us accept the most cruel fate, in order that we may bequeath to our children a stainless and respected name. . . .

"LUCIE."

Five Years of My Life

CONTINUATION OF MY DIARY.

August 30, 1896.

Again the period which so irritates my nerves; when I am waiting for the mail, when I ask myself what day it will come, and what news it will bring. What a painful month of August my poor Lucie must have had! First, the letter which I wrote her at the beginning of July, in the midst of the fever I had for ten days, and when I was not receiving any news from home. It was everything at once coming to add to my troubles. I could not contain myself, and so I again wrote to her my distress and grief, as if she did not already suffer enough, as if her impatience to see the end of this horrible tragedy were not as great as mine. My poor, dear Lucie! her *fête*-day must have passed very sorrowfully. I thought it was impossible to endure greater suffering, yet that day was worse than the others. If I had not restrained myself with fierce will,

checking my heart, repressing my whole being, I should have shrieked with pain, so acute and violent was my grief.

Through space, dearest Lucie, I send you now the expression of my deep affection and all my love, and this cry, which shall always be the same, ardent and invariable—courage, and again courage!

When we think of the object in view—the unmasking of the whole truth, the complete restoration of the honour of our name, sufferings, nameless tortures, all else must disappear, all else must be obliterated.

September, 1, 1896.

Day horribly long; passed in waiting, as happens every month, for my letters, in asking also what news they bring me. I am petrified, as it were, in my sorrow; I am obliged to concentrate all my strength to think and see no more.

What torment for a family whose entire life has ever been a life of honour, uprightness, and loyalty!

Five Years of My Life

Wednesday, September 2, 1896, 10 A.M.

My nerves have made me suffer horribly all night; I should have liked to quiet them a little this morning by walking, but the rain falls in torrents, a rare thing at this time of year, for this is the dry season.

Once more, I have nothing to read.

None of all the parcels of books sent me by my dear Lucie since the month of March have reached me. I have nothing to kill the terribly slow time. I asked long ago for some sort of manual labour, no matter what, with which to occupy myself a little; they have not even answered me.

I study the horizon through the grating of my little window, to see if I cannot catch sight of the smoke which announces the coming of the mail-boat from Cayenne.

Same day; noon.

On the horizon, in the direction of Cayenne, I discover a wreath of smoke. It must be the mail-boat.

Same day; 7 P.M.

The boat arrived at one o'clock in the afternoon; I have not had my letters, and I think it did not bring them. What infernal torment! But above all soars immutable the defence of our honour; that is the aim, never varying, no matter what our troubles may be!

Thursday, September 3, *six o'clock* A.M.

I have had a horrible night of fever and delirium.

Nine o'clock A.M.

The last boat has not brought my letters It is clear that they have remained in Cayenne, where they have been detained since the 28th of last month.

Friday, September 4, 1896.

Yesterday evening I finally received the mail, and there was only a single one of the letters that my dear Lucie had written me. I feel that with all at home there is wild des-

pair at being unable as yet to inform me of the discovery of the guilty man, the end of our sufferings.

In reading the letters from my family, sweat rolled down my forehead, and my limbs trembled under me.

Is it possible that human beings can suffer thus, and so undeservedly ?

In such a situation, words have no longer any value ; one even suffers no longer, one becomes so dazed.

Oh, my poor Lucie ! oh my poor little ones !

Ah ! on the day when justice shall be done and the guilty one unmasked, may the burden of all these nameless tortures recoil on those who have persecuted the innocent man and his whole family !

Saturday, September 5, 1896.

I have just written three long letters, successively, to my dear Lucie, to tell her not to allow herself to be cast down, but to continue her efforts, appealing to every source of help.

Such a situation as ours, endured for so long, becomes too overwhelming, too atrocious. It is a question of the honour of our name, of the future of our children. In view of that consideration, everything that rebels in our hearts or dethrones our minds, or makes bitterness rise up from the heart to the lips, should be repressed.

I no longer speak of my days and nights ; they resemble one another in misery.

Sunday, September 6, 1896.

I have just been warned that I must no longer walk in the part of the isle which had been reserved to me ; I can henceforth only walk around my hut.

How long shall I still hold out ? I cannot know! I wish this inhuman treatment would soon end, otherwise I can only bequeath my children to France, to that beloved country of mine which I have always served devotedly, loyally, beseeching from the bottom of my soul all those who are at the head of affairs to have the fullest light shed on this

shocking enigma. And on that day it will be for them to realise at last what atrocious and undeserved torment human beings sometimes suffer, and to extend to my poor children all the pity which such a misfortune as theirs so justly deserves.

Same day; two o'clock, night.

How my head throbs! How sweet death would be to me!

Oh, my dear Lucie! my poor children! all my dear ones!

What have I done on earth to be doomed to suffer thus?

Monday, September 7, 1896.

Yesterday evening I was put in irons!

Why, I know not.

Since I have been here, I have always strictly followed the line traced out for me, and I have scrupulously observed the orders given me.

How is it I did not go mad during the long fearful night? What wonderful strength

a clear conscience and the feeling of duty to be fulfilled toward one's children gives one!

As an innocent man, my imperious duty is to go on to the end of my strength; so long as they have not killed me outright, I will ever perform my duty.

As to those who thus constitute themselves my executioners, ah! I leave their own consciences to judge them when the truth shall be revealed.

Everything in life comes to light sooner or later.

Same day.

All that I suffer is horrible, yet I no longer feel anger against those who thus torture an innocent man; I only have a great pity for them.

Tuesday, September 8, 1896.

These nights in irons! I do not even speak of the physical suffering, but what moral ignominy! And without any explan-

ation, without knowing why or for what reason! In what an atrocious nightmare have I been living for nearly two years!

In any case, my duty is to go to the limit of my strength; I shall fulfil it to the end.

Yet the moral agony thus inflicted on an innocent man surpasses all his mere physical sufferings.

And in what deep distress of all my being I send you again my affection and my love, my dear Lucie, my darling children!

Same day, two o'clock A.M.

My brain has been so shocked, so upset by all that has happened to me for nearly two years that I can do no more. Everything fails in me.

It is really too much for human shoulders to bear.

Why am I not in the tomb? Oh, everlasting rest!

Once again, if I do not survive, I bequeath my children to France, to my beloved country.

My dear little Pierre, my dear little Jeanne, my dear Lucie, all of you, whom I love from the depths of my heart and with all the ardour of my soul, believe me, if these lines reach you, that I have done everything which it is humanly possible to do to stand firm.

Wednesday, September 9, 1896.

The Commandant of the Islands came yesterday evening.* He told me that the recent measure which had been taken, in reference to putting me in irons, was not a punishment, but "a measure of precaution," for the prison administration had no complaint to make againt me.

Putting in irons a measure of precaution!

* The Commandant, who always bore himself correctly, and whose name I have never known, was shortly afterwards replaced by Deniel.

When I am already guarded like a wild beast, night and day, by a warder armed with rifle and revolver! No; the truth should be told: that it is a measure of hatred and torture, ordered from Paris by those who, not being able to strike a family, strike an innocent man, because neither he nor his family will or should bow their heads, and thus submit to the most frightful judicial error which has ever been made. Who is it that thus constitutes himself my executioner and the executioner of my dear ones? I know not.

One easily divines that the local administration (except the chief-warder, who has been specially sent from Paris) feels a horror of such arbitrary and inhuman measures, but is compelled to apply them to me. It has no choice but to carry out the orders which are imposed on it.

No; the responsibility for them is of higher source; it rests entirely with the author or authors of these inhuman orders.

In any case, no matter what the sufferings,

the physical and moral tortures they may inflict on me, my duty and that of my family remains always the same.

As I keep thinking of all this, I no longer fear to become even angry; I have an immense pity for those who thus torture human beings! What remorse they are preparing for themselves, when everything shall come to light; for history unmasks all secrets.

I am overwhelmed with sadness; my heart is so torn, my brain is so shattered, that I can scarcely collect my thoughts; it is indeed the acme of suffering, and still I have this crushing enigma to face.

Thursday, September 10, 1896.

I am so worn out, so broken in body and soul, that I am bringing my diary to a close to-day, not knowing how long my strength will keep up or how soon my brain will give way under the strain of so much misery.

I will close it with this last prayer to the President of the Republic, in case I should succumb before seeing the curtain fall on this horrible drama:

"MONSIEUR LE PRÉSIDENT,

"I take the liberty of asking you to allow this diary, which has been written day by day, to be sent to my wife.

"It may perhaps contain, Monsieur le Président, expressions of anger and disgust relative to the most terrible conviction that has ever been pronounced against a human being, and a human being who has never forfeited his honour. I do not feel equal to the task of re-reading, of going over the horrible recital again.

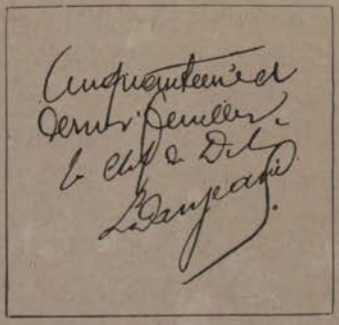
"I now reproach nobody; every one has acted within his faculties, and as his conscience dictated.

"I simply declare once more that I am innocent of this abominable crime, and still ask for one thing, the same thing, that search

may be made for the true culprit, the author of this abominable deed.

"And on the day when the light breaks, I beg that my dear wife and my dear children may receive all the pity that such a great misfortune should inspire."

END OF MY DIARY.



HEAD-WARDER'S SIGNATURE TO LAST LEAF OF THE DIARY.

VIII

THE days passed thus, sadly and gloomily, during the first period of my captivity on the Iles du Salut. Every three months I received some books, which were forwarded to me by my wife, but I had no physical occupation; the nights especially, which in this climate are almost always twelve hours long, were abominably dreary. During the month of July 1895, I made a request to be allowed to purchase some carpenter's tools; the head warder categorically refused me permission to do so, under the pretext that the tools might constitute a means of escape. I wonder how I could have escaped from a barren island where I was closely watched night and day!

In the autumn of 1896, the already severe

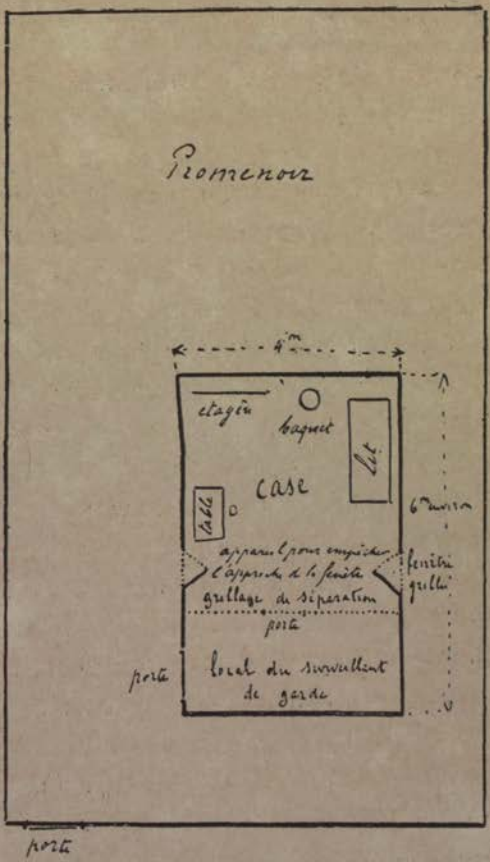
routine to which I was subjected became more rigorous still.

On September 4, 1896, the prison administration received instructions from M. André Lebon, the Colonial Minister, to keep me locked-up in my hut night and day until further orders, and to be locked and bolted in at night. He was to put up a solid palisade round the outer edge of my exercise yard and to post a sentinel in it, in addition to the warders who were watching my hut. In addition to this, my letters and any parcels that might be addressed to me were to be intercepted; and henceforth only a copy of my correspondence was to forwarded.

In conformity with these instructions, I was locked up in my hut night and day, without even a moment's exercise. This absolute confinement lasted the whole of the time they were bringing the wood and putting up the palisade, that is to say, about two months and a half. The heat of this year was particularly tropical; it was so

great in the hut that the warders on duty made complaint after complaint, declaring that they felt their heads bursting ; in answer to their appeals, they were allowed to water the inside of the adjoining lobby in which they sat every day. As for myself, I was literally melting.

Dating from September 6, I was put under double lock at night, and this punishment, which lasted nearly two months, consisted of the following measures : two bars of iron, in the shape of U (AA), were fixed by their lower extremities to the sides of my bed. Into these irons another iron bar (B) was fastened, to which two rings (CC) were attached. At the extreme end of this bar, on one side was a solid terminal (D) and on the other a padlock (E), arranged in in such a way that the bar was fixed to the irons AA, and consequently to the bed. Of course, when my feet were fixed in the two rings, there was no possibility of my moving; I was invariably fastened down to my bed. The torture was horrible, especially on these



porte

2e caserne de surveillants

(la 1re entièrement a été occupée, le nombre de surveillants ayant été augmenté)

sultry nights. Very soon these rings, tightly fastened round my ankles, began to rub sore places.

The hut was surrounded by a palisade, about seven feet high and about five feet distant from the hut. This palisade was much higher than the little barred windows of the hut, which were not quite four feet above the ground, consequently I had neither light nor air in the interior of the hut. Beyond this first palisade, which was completely closed, and which was a palisade of defence, a second palisade was built, also completely closed and of the same height, and which, like the first one, hid everything outside it from my sight. After about three months of the strictest confinement, I received permission to walk between these two palisades, which thus formed a narrow walk, during the day, under a burning sun, with no trace of shade, and always accompanied by a warder.

Up to September 4, 1896, I had occupied my hut only during the night and in

LIBRARY
OF THE
BOMBAY
BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

the hottest hours of the day. In addition to the time I spent in walking about the portion of the island reserved to me, I used often to sit in the shadow of the hut, opposite the sea; and if my thoughts were sad and anxious, or if I happened to be ill with fever, as was often the case, I at any rate had the consolation, in my extreme misery, of looking at the sea, of gazing at the waves, and, on stormy days, of feeling my soul rise in sympathy with the angry billows. But with September 4 this came to an end; the sight of the sea was forbidden me; I stifled in my hut, where there was neither air nor light. The only alternative was the exercise walk between the two palisades during the day, under the blazing sun, with no shade at all.

During the month of June 1896, I had had several severe attacks of fever, followed by congestion of the brain. During one of these terrible nights of wretchedness and fever, I tried to rise; I fell like a log on the floor of the hut and lay there in a swoon,

The warder on duty picked me up unconscious and covered with blood. During the days which followed I could take no food. I got very thin, and my health was much broken. I was still very weak when the arbitrary and inhuman measures of the 4th of September came into force, which made this an additional trial. This was what made me think that the end had come; however strong may be the will and energy of a man, physical strength has its limits, and I had now reached the end of mine. So I closed my diary, with the object of sending it to my wife. Besides, a few days afterwards, all my papers were seized; after this I was only allowed a limited quantity of paper, each sheet numbered and initialed as it was at first; this I had to return after it was written upon, before I could receive any more.

But during one of these long nights of agony, fixed to my bed and with sleep far from my eyes, I sought my guiding star, the inspiring light of my moments of supreme

resolution. Suddenly I saw it gleam out brilliantly before me, dictating my duty: "Now less than ever have you a right to desert your post, less than ever have you the right to shorten by a single day your sad and wretched life. Whatever punishments they inflict on you, you must keep on, as long as your life shall last; you must stand erect before your murderers, as long as you have a shadow of strength, a living wreck, keeping yourself before their eyes, through the indomitable energy of your soul."

From that moment I made up my mind to struggle on more earnestly than ever.

During the period immediately succeeding this, from September 1896, to August 1897, the watch kept over me became daily more rigorous.

At first the number of warders, exclusive of the head warder, had been five; this was raised to six and afterwards to ten warders, in the course of the year 1897. Later it was augmented still more. Until 1896, I received, every three months, books sent by my wife,

Dating from September 1896, these parcels were intercepted. I was informed, it is true, that I could order twenty books every three months, which would be bought at my own expense; I sent in a first application, which was not complied with until several months later; a second was still longer in reaching me; then a third, which was never attended to at all. After this I had to subsist upon the stock I already had.

This stock consisted of, besides a certain number of scientific and literary reviews, a few books of current literature; "Studies in Contemporary History" by Scherer, Lanson's "History of Literature," some of Balzac's works, the "Mémoires" of Barras, the "Lesser Criticism" of Janin, a history of painting, the "History of the Francs," Augustin Thierry's "Account of the Merovingien Times," volumes VII. and VIII. of Lavisse and Rambaud's "General History, from the Fourth Century to the Present Day," Montaigne's "Essays," and, above all, Shakespeare's works. I never understood

this great writer so well as during this tragic period; I read him over and, over again; "Hamlet" and "King Lear" appealed to me with all their dramatic power. I took up science again, and, not having the necessary books, I had to reconstruct the elements of the integral and differential calculus.

Thus, I forced my mind—though the moments alas! were too brief—to lose itself in an order of ideas totally different from those which usually absorbed it.

At the end of a short time, my books were in a pitiable state; vermin got into them, gnawed them, and laid their eggs in them.

Vermin swarmed in my hut; mosquitoes, as soon as the rainy season began; ants, all the year round, in such large numbers that I had to isolate my table by placing the legs of it in old preserve boxes filled with petroleum.

Water had been scarce, for the ants had formed a chain across the surface of it, and when the chain was complete, they crossed from one side to the other, as by a bridge.

The most tiresome insect was the spider-crab; its bite is venomous. The spider-crab is a creature whose body resembles that of a crab, and its legs are long, like those of a spider. Altogether it is about as large as a man's hand. I killed many of them in my hut, into which they came through the aperture between the roof and the walls.

In a few words, after the crushing events of the month of September 1896, I went through a time of utter prostration, followed by a reaction of mental energy, my soul rising pure and lofty above all things.

In October I wrote to my wife:

"Îles du Salut,
"*October* 3, 1896.

"I have not yet received my letters for August. Nevertheless I want to send you a few words to assure you of my intense affection.

"I wrote to you last month and opened my heart to you, telling you all my thoughts.

I have nothing to add now. I hope they will give you the assistance you have the right to demand. I only wish for one thing; and that is that I may soon learn that light has been thrown upon this horrible business. And I want to tell you, too, that you must not let the intense poignancy of our sufferings corrupt our hearts. Our name, we ourselves, must come out of this horrible affair in the same state in which we entered it.

"But in the face of such misery, our courage must increase, not to recriminate or to complain, but to demand, to throw light upon this terrible drama, to search out those whose victims we are.

"If I write to you often and at such length, it is because there is one thing that I want to express better than I do; and that is, supported by our consciences, we must rise superior to all, never flinching, never complaining, like people of spirit suffering martyrdom and may be sinking under it; we must simply do our duty, and that duty is, as far as I am concerned, to bear up as

long as I can; for you, for all of you, to try to throw light on this miserable affair, by appealing to all quarters for help, for I verily doubt whether human beings have ever suffered more deeply than we have."

"Îles du Salut,
"*October* 5, 1896.

"I have just this moment received your dear kind letter of August, as well as those of the family, and I write to you under the profound influence, not only of the sufferings that we are all enduring, but of that of the misery of which I told you in my letter of July 6.

"Ah! dear Lucie, how weak is human nature, how cowardly and selfish it sometimes is! As I think I told you, I was at that time suffering from a fever which consumed me, body and brain—and my spirit is so broken, my torments so great. And then, in the profound misery of all my being, when I longed so intensely for a friendly hand, a sympathetic face, when I was deli-

rious with fever and grief at receiving no letter from you, I felt I must pour out my woes, which I could not give vent to elsewhere.

"I have gained control over myself now; I am once more what I was, and I will remain so until my last breath.

"As I told you in my letter of the day before yesterday, we must, sustained by our consciences, rise superior to all, but with the firm resolve to prove my innocence before the whole of France.

"Our name must issue from this horrible affair as pure as it was when it was crushed by it; our children must enter upon life with their heads erect and proud.

"As to any advice which I can give you, anything which I may have mentioned in my last letters, you must, of course, understand that any counsel I may offer is merely what is dictated by my heart. You yourself all of you, are in a better position, and better advised, better able to judge what is best to be done.

"I unite with you in hoping that this dreadful business will soon be cleared up, that the sufferings of all of us will soon be over. Whatever happens, we must go on hoping; hope will lessen our agony, overcome our misery, and help us to restore a stainless and respected name to our children.

"ALFRED."

The letter from my wife which I received on October 5, 1896, was one dated August 13, the only one of all the letters written to me by her during this month which reached me. I quote this simple passage from it:

"PARIS,
"*August* 13, 1896.

"I have just received your letter of July 6, and my eyes are still swollen with tears as I write. My poor, poor dear husband, what a Calvary is yours, to what a martyrdom you are submitting. It is so awful, so overwhelm-

ing, that the mere thought of it drives me mad.

"LUCIE."

In November I did not receive a single letter from my wife written by her in September; these never reached me.

In December I received, out of all the letters written me by my wife in October, a single one, from which the following is an extract:

"PARIS,
"*October* 10, 1896.

"I am awaiting letters from you with the keenest anxiety. Only think! I have had no news from you since August 9, that is to say, for two months and a half very nearly. They are long anxious weeks that pass between the posts, and each day's delay brings me fresh suffering.

"LUCIE."

On January 4, 1897, I wrote to my wife:

Five Years of My Life

"Îles du Salut,
"*January* 4, 1897.

"I have just received your letters of November, together with those of the family. The profound emotion which they caused me is always the same: indescribable.

"Like you, my dear Lucie, my thoughts are always with you, with our beloved children, and with you all; and when my heart is overwhelmed, when its strength is exhausted with striving against this martyrdom, which crushes it like grain between the millstones, which tears the most noble, the purest, the most elevated sentiments out of it, and snaps all the springs of the soul, I always repeat the same words to myself: 'However dire your agony may be, still struggle on that you may die happy, knowing that you leave your children an honoured and respected name.'

"My heart, as you know, has not changed. It is that of a soldier, indifferent to all physical sufferings, setting honour before, above

all, who has lived through and resisted this overpowering, incredible calamity ; it is the heart of a Frenchman, of a man who only lives because he is a father, and because he has made up his mind that honour shall be restored to the name borne by his children.

"I have written to you at length, already; I have tried to sum up lucidly, to explain why I had such perfect confidence and faith in you all ; for, believe me, you may have absolute faith in the appeal I have made in the name of our children ; I have made of it a duty which right-minded men will never neglect ; besides, I know too well the sentiments which animate you all ever to think that any of you will relax your efforts so long as the truth has not been elicited.

"Therefore, let all your hearts and energies converge towards the one great object, and strive until it has been attained : the discovery of the author or authors of this villainous crime. But alas ! although, as I have just said, my confidence is absolute, the energy of heart and brain has

its limits, especially under such grievous conditions and borne so long. I know also that you are suffering, and that is awful.

"Besides, it is not in your power to shorten my (our) martyrdom. The Government alone possesses means of investigation powerful enough, decisive enough, to do so, and will use them, unless it wishes that a Frenchman who asks nothing from his country but to have justice, light, and truth brought to bear on this sad drama, who asks nothing from life but to see the honour of his name restored to his dear little ones, should succumb to a situation so overwhelming, under the odium of a crime that he has never committed.

"So that I hope that the Government will lend you its aid. I can only repeat with all the strength of my soul that, no matter what happens to me, you must always be courageous and strong; and that I embrace you with all my heart and all my strength, and that I love you and our dearly-beloved children.

"ALFRED."

I extract the following passages from the letters I received from my wife at this date:

"PARIS,
"*November* 12, 1896.

"I have just received your dear letters of October 3 and 5. I am still quite moved and happy from the sweet emotion caused by your words. I entreat you, my dearly-beloved husband, not to think of my grief; I can bear my sufferings. As I have already told you, my own personality takes a secondary place, and I should be broken-hearted to think that, by my complaints, I was adding one sorrow more to your burden. Do not think of me; you need all your strength, all your courage, to bear up against this moral contest, stern and hard as it is; that you may not be depressed by physical fatigue, the climate, by the privations of all kinds that are imposed upon you."

"PARIS,
"*November* 24, 1896.

"I should like to be able to chat with you every day. . . . But what is the good of constantly repeating the same things? I know quite well that my letters resemble each other, that the same idea pervades them all, the one idea that dominates all of us, that on which our lives, those of our children, and the whole family depend. Like yourself, I can think of but one thing —your rehabilitation; I pursue but one aim, that of restoring your honour. Beyond this fixed idea, which continually haunts me, nothing interests me, nothing touches me. . . .

"LUCIE."

Then in February:

"PARIS,
"*December* 15, 1896.

"I was in hopes of receiving this month again a few kind letters from you; I took

pleasure in thinking of our good talk together, but I have received nothing; so I have taken up your letters of the month of October and read and re-read them."

"PARIS,
"*December* 25, 1896.

"Once again I am going to send off my letters to you, with bitter chagrin to be unable to give you the news you desire and which we all await anxiously. I know this prolongation of your sufferings will be for you a new disappointment; that is why I am doubly distressed. . . . Poor friend! I suffer frightful anguish, and my heart is torn at the thought of your distress, which all our exertions, so far, have not been able to shorten.

"LUCIE."

In the month of March 1897, they made me wait until the 28th of the month before delivering my wife's letters of the month of January. For the first time, the copies only of her letters were handed to me. How far

did this reproduction, written out by an unknown hand, represent the original? It is a question which I cannot answer.*

I felt keenly this new outrage, coming after so many others; it wounded me to the depths of my soul, but nothing could weaken my will.

I wrote to my wife:

"Îles du Salut,
"*March* 28, 1897.

"After a long and anxious waiting, I have just received a copy of two letters from you, written in January. You complain that I do not write you more at length. I wrote you

* Since I wrote these lines, I have applied to the Ministry of the Colonies for the originals of my wife's letters, both those which never reached me, and those which I received only in copy, and also all my own writings during my stay in the Île du Diable, of which each sheet of paper, numbered and signed, page by page, was taken away as soon as finished, before a fresh supply of paper was given me.

All that was written by me at the Île du Diable has been found and returned. But of the numerous

numerous letters towards the end of January, perhaps by this time they have reached you.

"And then, the sentiments that are in our hearts, and that rule our souls, we know them. Moreover, we have, both of us, drained the cup of all suffering.

"You ask me again, dear Lucie, to speak to you at length about my own self. Alas! I cannot. When one suffers so atrociously, when one has to bear such misery of soul, it is impossible to know at night where one will be on the morrow.

"You will forgive me if I have not always been a stoic; if often I have made you share my bitter grief, you who had already so much to bear. But sometimes it was too much; and I was absolutely alone.

"But to-day, darling, as yesterday, let us avoid all complaints, all recriminations. Life is nothing! You must triumph over all

letters of my wife, which did not reach me, or reached me only in copies, only four have been given back, all the others having been destroyed by the order of M. Lebon, then Minister of the Colonies.

griefs, whatever they may be ; over all sufferings, like a pure, exalted human soul that has a sacred duty to fulfil.

"Be invincibly strong and valiant ; keep your eyes fixed straight before you, looking to the end—looking neither to the right nor to the left.

"Ah ! I know well that you too are only a human being. . . . but when grief becomes too great, when the trials that the future has in store for you are too hard to bear, then look into the faces of our children, and say to yourself that you must live, that you must be there to sustain them, until the day when our country shall recognise what I have been, what I am. . . .

"But what I wish to repeat to you with all the force of my soul, with a voice that you should always hear, is 'Courage, courage !' Your patience, your resolution, that of all of us, should never tire until the truth, full and absolute, shall have been revealed and recognised.

"I cannot fill my letters full enough of all

the love that my heart contains for you, for you all.

"If I have been able to resist until now so much agony of soul, so much mental misery and trial, it is because I have drawn strength from the thought of you and of the children.

"ALFRED."

Of the two letters from my wife, copied by some clerk and received only on the 28th of March, I give the following passage:

"PARIS,

"*January* 1, 1897.

"To-day, more particularly still, I need to come and draw near to you and to talk to you of our sorrows as well as of our hopes. This day is all the sadder that it recalls to me happy remembrances now so far away; I wish to pass it entirely in talking to you; it will seem to me less long and less bitter. I will not express again wishes repeated so often. I pray with all my strength for that long-delayed moment when we shall at last

be able to live in peace, when I can give back to you an honoured name and fold you in my arms. . . . Let us hope this new year will bring us the realisation of our hopes. . .

"In this continual suspense in which I live, your letters are my only relief. They are something of yourself, a fragment of your thoughts, which comes to seek me and console me during a long month. . . .

"LUCIE."

I was not able, from the few copied letters I received, to comprehend the events passing at this time in France; I recall them briefly:

Articles in the *Éclair*, September 15, 1896, disclosing the communication in Court, but only to the Judges, of a secret document.

The courageous initiative of Bernard Lazare who, in November 1896, published his pamphlet "A Judicial Error."

Publication by the *Matin*, November 10, 1896, of the facsimile of the Bordereau.

The Castelin interpellation, November 18, in the Chamber of Deputies.

I learned of these events only on my return, in 1899.

Neither my wife nor any one outside of the Ministry of War then knew of the discovery of the real traitor, by Lieutenant-Colonel Picquart, nor of the heroic conduct of this admirable officer, and the criminal manœuvres which prevented him from bringing to an issue his work on behalf of truth and justice.

The original letters now begin. In April, I received but one letter from my wife, that of February 20, of which the following is an extract. I learned from it that she received only copies of my letters to her.

"PARIS,
"*February* 20, 1897.

"I have had the joy of receiving a kind, new letter from you; I am still happy because of it, although it is but a copy of your original. It was always a great satisfaction

for me to see your handwriting; it seemed to me in that way I had something of you. A copy takes from a letter all semblance of privacy, and deprives one of that impression which only the physical and quite personal handiwork accompanying thought can give. The lack of this impression is one of the most painful things to me among all the minor annoyances I have to endure. . . .

"LUCIE."

In May I wrote to my wife:

ÎLES DU SALUT,
"*May* 4, 1897.

"I have just received your letters of March, with those of the family, and it is always with the same poignant emotion, with the same sorrow, that I read your words, the letters from you all, so deeply wounded are all our hearts, so torn by all our sufferings.

"I have already written to you, some days ago, when I was waiting for your dear

letters, and I told you that I did not wish to know or to understand why I had been thus crushed by every species of torture.

"But if, in the strength of my conscience, in the consciousness of my duty, I have been enabled to raise myself above everything, ever and always to stifle my heart, to choke down every revolt of my being, it does not follow that my heart has not deeply suffered, that it is not, alas! torn to shreds. But I told you, too, that never has the temptation to yield to discouragement entered my soul, nor should it ever again enter into yours, nor into the soul of any one of you. Yes; it is atrocious to suffer thus; yes, all this is appalling, and it is enough to shake every belief in all that makes life noble and beautiful . . . but today there can be no consolation for any one of us other than the discovery of the truth, the full light.

"Whatever, then, may be your pain, however bitter the grief of every one of you, say to yourselves that you have a sacred duty to

accomplish, and that nothing must turn you from it; and this duty is to re-establish a name in all its integrity in the eyes of all France.

"Now, to tell you all that my heart contains for you, for our children, for you all, is unnecessary, isn't it?

"In happiness, we do not begin to perceive all the depth, all the powerful tenderness that the recesses of the heart hold for the beloved. We need misfortune, the sense of the sufferings endured by those for whom we would give our last drop of blood, to understand its force, to grasp its tremendous power. If you knew how often, in the moments of my anguish, I have called to my assistance the thought of you, of our children, to force me to live on, to accept what I should never have accepted but for the thought of duty.

"And this always brings me back to it, my darling; do your duty heroically, invincibly, as a human soul, exalted and very proud; as a mother who is determined that

the name she bears, the name her children bear, shall be cleansed of this horrible stain.

"Say to yourself, then, as to every one, always and again, 'Courage, courage!'

"ALFRED."

A few extracts from my wife's letters received at this time:

"PARIS,
"*March* 5, 1897.

"Before having a talk with you, I wished to await the arrival of the mail; but I cannot restrain my impatience; I am unable to impose such a sacrifice on myself, for so long a time; I need to relax myself by coming to you to warm my heart at yours, and to forget for a moment the maddening thought of this interminable separation. At least, when writing to you, I have a few moments of illusion; my pen, my imagination, and the tension of my will bring me near to you, by your side, where I wish to be, comforting, consoling, and reassuring you in regard to the future, and bringing you all the un-

quenchable hope that fills my heart, and that I long to infuse into yours.

"It is only a fugitive instant, but it gives me the happiness of being close to you, and I feel that I live again. . . .

"LUCIE."

"PARIS,
"*March* 16, 1897.

"I had come for a talk with you a few days ago, when full of anxiety and waiting for news; I now have the dear letters I so ardently desired. Ever since, I have been drinking in your words, never weary of re-reading them.

"As was the case last month, I am deprived of the happiness of seeing your handwriting; only a copy is given me. You can imagine how my heart bleeds at the loss of the only comfort which, until the summer, had not been denied me. What a path of bitterness and grief we have to tread! These are only trifles to be passed over in silence, if we compare them to the greatness of our

task; but for sensitive natures all wounds are painful.

"If it must be so, let us think no more of it; and as we are called upon to fulfil a sacred duty for our name's sake and for that of our children, let us rise to the height of our mission, not stoop to notice these lesser miseries.

"If we are crushed by grief, at least let us have the satisfaction of duty done, let us stand strong and erect in tranquillity of conscience, maintaining our energy to achieve the triumph of our cause. . .

"LUCIE."

On June 6, 1897, there was a night alarm, which might have had dire consequences. Orders had been issued that, on the least sign from me of any attempt to escape, or of any evidence of outside interference, I should be in danger of my life. The warder on duty had instructions to prevent an abduction or escape, by the most decisive means. It may well be understood, with

such orders, how dangerous for me would be any alarm given to my keepers. Such measures were shameful, for how could I be held responsible for any attempt from the outside? If any had been made, I should necessarily have been utterly ignorant of the fact.

On that day, towards nine o'clock in the evening, a rocket was sent up from the Ile Royale. It was pretended that a schooner had been seen in the gulf formed by the Ile Saint Joseph and the Ile du Diable. The prison commandant gave orders to fire a blank cartridge at it and to prepare for combat. He came himself with a supplementary guard to reinforce the detachment at the Ile du Diable. I was lying down in my hut, the warder on duty being with me as usual every night. I was suddenly awakened by cannon-shots, followed by rifle-shots, and I saw the warder on guard, with his weapons drawn, looking at me with fixed attention. I asked "What is the matter?" He made no answer. But as I

paid no attention to incidents passing around me, all my thoughts being fixed in one direction, I made no further observation or movement. This, no doubt, was fortunate, for the orders to the guards were strict, and it is probable I should have been instantly shot if I had manifested surprise at these unwonted noises, and jumped from my bed.

On the 10th of August, 1897, I wrote to my wife :

"I have this instant received your three letters of the month of June and all the letters from the family. It is under the impression, always keen, always poignant, that so many sweet remembrances evoke in me, so many appalling sufferings also, that I will answer.

"I will tell you once more, first of my profound affection, of my immense tenderness, my admiration for your noble character; then I will open all my soul to you, and I will tell you your duty, your right, that you

should renounce only with your life. And this right, this duty, that is equally imprescriptible for my country as for you, is to resolve that the light shall shine full and entire upon this horrible drama; it is to resolve without weakening, without boasting, but with indomitable energy, that our name, the name that our dear children bear, shall be cleansed of this horrible stain.

"And this object, this and you, Lucie, you all should attain, like good and valiant French men and women who are suffering martyrdom, but not one of whom, no matter what bitter outrages he has suffered, has ever forgotten his duty to his country, for one single instant. And the day when the light shall shine, when the whole truth shall be revealed—as it must be, for neither time, patience, nor effort should be counted in working for such an end—ah, well! if I am no longer with you, it will be for you to rescue my name from this new outrage, so undeserved, that nothing has ever justified;

and I repeat it, whatever may have been my sufferings, however atrocious may have been the tortures inflicted upon me—tortures that I cannot forget, tortures that can be excused only by the passions that sometimes lead men astray, I have never forgotten that far above men, far above their passions, far above their errors, is our country. It is she who will be my final judge.

"To be an honest man does not wholly consist in being incapable of stealing a hundred sous from the pocket of a neighbour; to be an honest man, I say, is to be able always to see one's reflection in that mirror that forgets nothing, that sees everything, that knows everything. . . . I would impress upon you that nothing should shake your will; that high above my life hovers the one supreme care—the honour of my name, of the name you bear, the name our children bear.

"I embrace you with the ardent affection that animates my soul, the affection

that is to be extinguished only with my life.

"ALFRED."

After the erection of the palisades round my hut, it became utterly uninhabitable; it was a living death! From that moment there was neither air nor light, and the heat was torrid, stifling, during the dry season. In the rainy season it was a wretchedly damp lodging-place, in a country where humidity is the great scourge of the European. I was completely prostrated from lack of exercise, and by the pernicious influence of the climate. At the suggestion of the doctor, it was decided to build me a new hut.

And so, during the month of August 1897, while one of the palisades around my walk was being removed, to be used for the palisade of the new hut, I was again kept in close confinement.

IX

On August 25, 1897, I was taken to my new quarters, built on a little knoll between the dock and the camp formerly used for the lepers. This lodging was divided in halves by a solid iron grating across its whole width; I was on one side of this grating, the warder was on the other, so that he could never lose sight of me for an instant. Grated windows, too high to be reached, let in the light and a little air. Later on, to the iron bars there was added a screen of iron wire, which kept out the air still more; and then, to completely prevent me from approaching the window, the only place where I could breathe a little fresh air during these stifling days and nights in Guiana, they set up in the hut, before each window, two panels that formed, in conjunction with the window, a triangular prism. One of the panels was of sheet-iron, and the other a lattice-work of iron bars. The hut was surrounded by a

wooden palisade over nine feet high, with sharp pointed spikes resting on a stone wall about seven feet in height. The view of everything outside the hut, of all the sea, as well as the island itself, was completely cut off.

In spite of all this, the hut was higher, more spacious, and altogether preferable to the old one; moreover, on one side, the palisade had been set up farther away from the hut, and there was now but one single palisade. But the wet was still there; very often, during the heavy rains, there were several inches of water in my hut. And from this date the vexations inflicted on me were more frequent and exasperating than ever. The demeanour of my jailors towards me varied with the changes in the state of affairs in France, of which I was in complete ignorance. Fresh steps were taken to isolate me still more, if such a thing were possible. More than ever, I was obliged to maintain a haughty bearing, to prevent advantage being taken of me. Snares were often laid,

and the warders were directed to ask me insidious questions. During my nights of nervous irritation, when I was a prey to nightmare, the warder on duty would draw near to my bed and try to catch the words which escaped from my lips. During this period the prison governor, Deniel, instead of confining himself to the strict duties of his office, exercised the low and wretched trade of a spy; he evidently thought that in this way he would curry favours for himself with the administration.

The following extract from the general orders of transportation to the Ile du Diable was posted up in my hut:

"*Article* 22.—The convict will see to the cleanliness of his hut and the surrounding space allotted to him, and will prepare his own food.

"*Article* 23.—Regular rations are delivered to him, and he is authorised to better these by receiving provisions and liquids in reasonable measure, the regulation of which rests with the prison administration.

"All articles intended for the use of the convict shall be given to him only after minute examination, and in accordance with his daily needs.

"*Article* 24.—The convict shall hand to the chief warder all letters and papers written by him.

"*Article* 26.—Requests or complaints which the convict may desire to make can be received only by the chief warder.

"*Article* 27.—During the day, the doors of the hut are to remain open and, until night, the convict has the right to go about inside the space enclosed by the palisade.

"Any communication with the outside is forbidden him.

"In case that, contrary to the provisions of Article 4, the exigencies of service on the island should necessitate the presence of warders or convicts, other than those belonging to the ordinary service, the convict is to be confined in the hut until the departure of the other warders and convicts.

"*Article* 28.—During the night, the place

occupied by the convict shall be lighted inside and occupied, as during the day, by a warder."

I have since learned that, from this time on, my guards also received instructions to report all my movements and even the changes of expression on my features! It may be imagined how these orders were executed! But what is graver still is, that all the gestures and manifestations of my grief and sometimes of my impatience, were interpreted by Deniel with low, hateful malice. With a mind as ill-balanced as it was full of vanity, this functionary attached immense importance to the least incidents; the lightest puff of smoke, breaking the monotony of the sky at the horizon, was to him a certain sign of a possible rescue and was the excuse for more rigorous measures and fresh precautions. It may easily be seen how a watch, interpreted in this way, with its malignant intensity, necessarily reflected in the conduct of the subordinates, was calculated to im-

mensely aggravate the rigours of my imprisonment. Moreover, I know no torture more maddening to the nerves and more insulting to a man's pride than that which I suffered during five years—to have two eyes, full of enmity, levelled at me day and night, every instant and under every condition, and never to be able to escape or defy them; without one moment's respite.

On September 4, 1897, I wrote to my wife:

"I have just received your letters of July. You tell me again that you have the certainty that the full light of day is soon to shine; this certainty is in my soul; it is inspired by the right that every man has to demand it, to resolve that he shall have it, when he demands but one thing—the truth.

"As long as I have the strength to live in a situation as inhuman as it is undeserved, I shall continue to write to you, to inspire you by my indomitable will.

"Indeed, the last letters I wrote to you are my moral will and testament. I spoke

to you in them first of all of our love. I confessed to you also my physical and cerebral breakdown; but I spoke to you no less energetically of your duty, the duty of you all.

"This grandeur of soul that you all have shown equally—let there be no illusion about it—this grandeur of soul should be accompanied neither by weakness nor by boasting. On the contrary, it should ally itself to a determination each day more resolute, a determination that grows stronger each hour of the day—to march on towards the goal—the discovery of the truth, the whole truth, for all France.

"Truly this wound sometimes bleeds too painfully, and my heart rises in revolt. Worn out as I am, I often shrink under the blows of the sledge-hammer, and then I am no more than a poor human being, full of agony and suffering; but my indomitable soul lifts me up, quivering with pain, with energy, with implacable longing for that which is most precious in this world—our

honour, the honour of our children, the honour of us all. And then I brace myself anew and cry out to all the world the thrilling appeal of a man who asks, who wants only justice. And then I come to kindle in you all the ardent fire that burns in my soul, that shall be extinguished only with my life.

"As for me, I live only by my fever; for a long time I have lived on from day to day, proud when I have been able to hold out through a long day of twenty-four hours. I am subjected to the stupid and useless fate of the Man in the Iron Mask, because there is always that same afterthought lingering in the mind. I told you so frankly in one of my last letters.

"As for you, you must not pay any attention either to what any one says, or to what any one thinks. You have your duty to do unflinchingly, and it is incumbent upon you to resolve, not less unflinchingly, to have your right, the right of justice and of truth. Yes; the light must break forth. I put my thought clearly. . . .

"I can, then, but hope for both of us, for all, that our martyrdom is soon to have an end.

"Now, what can I say further to express my profound, my immense love for you, for our children; to express my affection for your dear parents, for all our brothers and sisters, for all who suffer this appalling, this long-drawn-out martyrdom?

"To speak at length of myself, of all my little affairs, is useless. I do it sometimes in spite of myself, for the heart has irresistible revolts; bitterness, do what I will, wells up from my heart to my lips, when I see that everything is misunderstood, everything that goes to make life noble and beautiful; and, truly, were it a question of my own self only, long ago I would have gone to search in the peace of the tomb for forgetfulness of all that I have seen, of all that I have heard, of all that I see each day.

"I have lived in order to sustain you, to sustain you all, with my indomitable will; for it is no longer a question of my life, it is

a question of my honour, of the honour of us all, of the life of our children.

"I have borne everything without flinching, without lowering my head; I have stifled my heart; I curb each day the revolts of my being, urging you all again and again to demand the truth, without lassitude as without boasting.

"But I hope for us both, my poor beloved, for us all, that the efforts, either of one or of another, may soon bring about their just result; that the day of justice may at last dawn for us all, who have waited for it so long.

"Each time I write to you, I can hardly lay down my pen—not that I have anything to tell you . . . but because I am again about to leave you for long days, living only in my thoughts of you, of the children, of you all.

"So I will end by embracing you and my dear children, your dear parents, all of our dear brothers and sisters; clasping you in my arms with all my strength, and repeating

with an energy that nothing can weaken so long as the breath of life is in my body: 'Courage, courage and determination!'

"ALFRED."

In the mail of the month of July 1897, arriving on September 4, I received a letter, from which the following extract remained an enigma for me. The letter of July 1 to which it refers never reached me.

"PARIS,
"*July* 15, 1897.

"You must have derived a better impression from the letter I wrote you on July 1 than from those which preceded it. I was less distressed, and the future at last appeared to me under less sombre colours. . . .

"We have made an immense step forward towards the truth; unhappily, I cannot tell you more. . . .

"LUCIE."

In October came another letter, from which the following is an extract:

"PARIS,
"*August* 15, 1897.

"I am filled with anxiety at not having news from you; for nearly seven weeks there have come no letters, and the weeks count triply when passed in disquietude; I hope it is only a delay and that I shall receive a good mail. All my joy is in reading the lines so full of courage which you send me, while waiting for something better; waiting that you may be given back to me, and that I may live in calm happiness at your side, and be comforted. . . .

"Try not to think, nor to make your poor brain work. Do not wear yourself out in useless conjectures. Think only of the end and aim. Give rest to your poor head, wearied by so many shocks.

"LUCIE."

Then in November:

"PARIS,
"*September* 1, 1897.

"With joy I write to confirm again the news which I gave you in my letters of last

month. I am indeed happy to say that we are entering on the true path. I can only repeat to you to have confidence, not to grieve any more, and to be very certain that we shall attain our ends. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*September* 25, 1897.

"I will add but one word to my long letters of this month.* I am very happy to think that they have given you immense hope and the strength needed to await your rehabilitation. I cannot say more to you about it than I have written in my last letters. . . .

"LUCIE."

I answered these letters:

"*November* 4, 1897.

"I have just this moment received your letters. Words, my own darling, are powerless to express what poignant emotions the

* The letter of September 1, and that of the 25th were the only ones of that month which reached me.

sight of your dear writing awakes in my heart; and indeed it is these sentiments of ardent affection that this emotion awakens in me that give me the strength to wait until the supreme day when the truth shall be made clear concerning this sad and terrible drama.

"Your letters breathe such a feeling of confidence that they have brought serenity to my heart, suffering so much for you, for our dear children.

"You tell me, poor darling, not to think, not to try to understand. Oh, try to understand! I have never done that; it is impossible for me. But how can I arrest my thoughts? All that I can do is, as I have told you, to try to wait for the supreme day of truth.

"During the last months I have written you long letters, in which I poured out my overburdened heart. What would you? For three years, I have seen myself the toy of events to which I am a stranger, having never deviated from the absolute rule of

conduct that I had imposed upon myself, that my conscience, as a loyal soldier devoted to his country, had imposed upon me. Even in spite of oneself, the bitterness mounts from the heart to the lips; anger sometimes takes one by the throat, and one is forced to cry out in pain.

"Formerly, I swore never to speak of myself, to close my eyes to everything, because for me, as for you, for us all, there can be but one supreme consolation—that of truth, of complete light.

"But my too prolonged sufferings, my appalling situation, the climate, which alone makes the brain burn—if all this combined has not made me forget a single one of my duties, it has ended by leaving me in a state of cerebral and nervous prostration that is terrible.

"I chatter on to you, though I have nothing to tell you; but all this does me good, it rests my heart and relaxes the tension of my nerves. Truly, my heart often is shrivelled with poignant grief when I think

of you, of our children ; and then I ask myself what wrong I can have done upon this earth, that those whom I love the most, those for whom I would give my blood drop by drop, should be tried by such awful agony. But even when the too full cup overflows, it is from the dear thought of you, from the thought of the children—the thought that makes all my being vibrate and tremble, that exalts it to its greatest heights—it is from this thought that I draw the strength to rise from the depths of despair, to utter the thrilling cry of a man who has begged so long for himself, for those he loves, only for justice and truth—nothing but truth and justice.

"I have summed up my resolution clearly, and I know that that determination is your own, that of all of you, and that nothing has ever been able to overcome it.

"It is this feeling, associated with all my duties, that has made me live ; it is this feeling also that has made me ask once more for you, for you all, every co-operation, a more powerful effort than ever on the part of all,

in a simple labour of justice and of reparation, by rising above all question of individuals, above all passions.

"Shall I still tell you of my affection? It is needless, is it not? for you know it. But what I wish to tell you again is this; that the other day I re-read all your letters, in order that I might pass some of the too long minutes near a loving heart, and an immense sentiment of wonder arose in me, at this spectacle of your dignity and your courage. If great misfortunes are the touchstone of noble souls, then, oh, my darling, yours is one of the most beautiful and noble souls of which it is possible to dream.

"ALFRED."

The month of November passed by and then the month of December 1897, without letters. At last, on January 9, 1898, after this long and anxious waiting, there came, together, my mail of October and November, from which I extract the following passages:

"PARIS,
"*October* 6, 1897.

"I did not succeed in expressing to you in my last letter and particularly, as I think, in communicating in its full truth the great confidence we all have, which has grown even stronger since, in the return of our happiness. I should like to tell you the joy I feel at seeing the horizon clearing and at having come nearly to the end of our sufferings. I feel myself wholly incapable of making you share my feelings, since for you, poor exiled one, there is always added to the distress of waiting the ignorance of all that we are doing. Vague sentences, the stringing together of words, give you little more than the assurance of our deep affection and our often-renewed promise that we shall succeed in rehabilitating you. If, like me, you could realise the progress we have made and the distance we have traversed through the depth of darkness towards the full light, how brightened and comforted you would feel!

It breaks my heart not to be able to tell you all that stirs me so deeply and gives me such hope. I suffer from the idea that you are undergoing a martyrdom which, though it must be prolonged physically until the wrong which has been done has been officially admitted, is at least morally useless, and that while I feel more reassured and tranquil, you are passing through alternatives of anguish and hope that might be spared you. . . .

"PARIS,
"*November* 17, 1897.

"I am uneasy at having no letter from you. Your last, dated September 4, reached me in the first days of October, and since then I am absolutely without news of you. I have never wasted my breath in complaints, and I shall certainly not begin now; and yet God knows how keenly I have suffered, remaining for weeks and weeks in the maddening distress which a total absence of news from you has caused me. From day to day,

I think my torments are about to cease, that I am to be reassured so far as I can be while you are still suffering. But hope on, with all your strength! How can I tell you of my hope in the future and yet confine myself to the limits permitted to me? It is indeed difficult; and I can only pledge you my word that within a time, very, very near, your name shall be cleared. Ah! if I could speak to you openly and tell you all the incidents of this frightful drama! . . .

"When this letter arrives in Guiana, I hope you will have received the good news for which you have been waiting these three long years.

"LUCIE."

When these letters reached me, in January, 1898, at the Ile du Diable, not only I had not received the good news which they heralded, but the petty annoyances inflicted on me had redoubled in intensity, and the watch kept over me was more rigorous than ever. From ten warders, the number had been increased

to thirteen; sentinels had been placed around my hut, the atmosphere of fear and suspicion reigned about me; I felt it in the attitude of my jailors.

At this time, also, a tower was built higher than the warders' barracks, and on its platform a Hotchkiss cannon was placed to defend the approaches to the island.

Once again I addressed to the President of the Republic and the members of the Government a renewal of the appeals I had made before.

In the first days of the month of February 1898, there arrived two letters from my wife, dated December 4 and 26, 1897. These two letters were partial copies of the originals.

I have since become aware that my wife had, in guarded language, given me to understand, in her letters of August or September 1897, that a member of the Senate had taken my cause in hand; this passage, of course, was suppressed, and I heard of the admirable initiative taken by M. Scheurer-Kestner only on my return to France, in 1899, as I also

VIEW OF DEVIL'S ISLAND

Showing the prison-hut inside the enclosure of palisades with the Governor's house in the background

To face p. 206

learned only at that date of the events which had previously taken place in France.

One of the extracts transmitted to me from my wife's letter of December 4, 1897, was particularly sad:

"I have received two letters from you. Although you say nothing to me of your sufferings, and these letters, like the others, are filled with noble dignity and admirable courage, I have divined in them your grief with such acuteness that I feel the need of offering you some comfort—of letting you hear a few words of affection from a loving heart whose tenderness and attachment are, as you know, as deep as they are unchangeable.

"But how many days have passed since you wrote those letters, and how much time must still elapse before these few lines come to remind you that my thoughts, day and night, are with you, and that every hour and every, minute of your long agony, my heart and soul and all that throbs within me, thrills

in sympathy with you. I feel myself the echo of your cruel sufferings, and would give my life to shorten your torture. If you knew what sorrow I feel at not being there, near you, and with what joy I would have accepted the harshest and bitterest existence, to share your exile, to encircle you with my affection, and heal your wounds as best I might.

"But it was ordained that we should not have even the consolation of suffering together, that we should drink our cup of bitterness to the last drop. . . ."

Then followed a few vague sentences of the hope which had been renewed so often.

In reply to this letter, I wrote to my wife:

February 7, 1898.

"I have just received your dear letters of December, and my heart is breaking; it is rent by the consciousness of so much unmerited suffering. I have told you that the thought of you, of the children, always raises

me up, quivering with anguish, with a supreme determination, in view of all that we hold most precious in the world—our honour, that of our children—to utter this cry of appeal that grows more and more thrilling—the cry of a man who demands nothing but justice for himself and those he loves, and who has the right to demand it.

"For the last three months, through fever and delirium, suffering martyrdom night and day for you, for our children, I have addressed appeal on appeal to the Chief of the State, to the Government, to those who caused me to be condemned, to the end that I may obtain justice, and I have not been answered!

"To-day I am reiterating my former appeals to the Chief of the State and to the Government, with still more energy, if that could be; for you must be no longer subjected to such a martyrdom, our children must not grow up dishonoured. I can no longer writhe in agony, in a black hole for an abominable crime that I did not

commit. And now I am waiting; I expect each day to hear that the light of truth is to shine for us at last.

"ALFRED."

In the course of the month of February, rigorous measures were yet more strongly emphasised; and, as I had received no reply to my previous appeals to the Chief Magistrate of the State and to the members of the Government, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Chamber of Deputies and to the Deputies:

"ÎLES DU SALUT,
"*February* 28, 1898.

"MONSIEUR LE PRÉSIDENT DE LA CHAMBRE DES DÉPUTÉS,

"MESSIEURS LES DEPUTÉS,

"From the day after my condemnation, that is, more than three years ago, when Commandant du Paty de Clam came to me, in the name of the Minister of War, to ask

me, after they had had me sentenced for an abominable crime which I had not committed, if I was innocent or guilty, I declared that not only I was innocent, but that I had demanded the fullest light on the matter, and also begged that investigations might be made through all the customary channels, either by inquiry through the military attachés, or by other means open to the Government.

"The reply was then made to me that higher interests than my own, owing to the origin of this dark and tragic affair and to the origin of the Bordereau, prevented recourse to the ordinary means of investigation, but that researches would be continued.

"I have waited three years, in the most frightful situation that could be imagined, suffering continually and without cause, and these researches have come to no result.

"If, therefore, interests higher than my own must still prevent the adoption of the only means of investigation which can finally put an end to the martyrdom of so

many human beings, and which alone can fully unravel this sad and tragic affair, these same interests cannot exact that a wife and children should be sacrificed to them. To deem otherwise would be to take us back to the darkest ages of our history, when truth and light were deliberately stifled and suppressed.

"Already, several months ago, I set forth all the tragic and undeserved horror of this situation to the high sense of justice of the Cabinet Ministers ; I now submit it also to the impartial consideration of the deputies, asking justice for me and mine, the life of my children, and that the martyrdom of so many human beings shall cease."

A similar letter, written in identical terms, was addressed at the same date to the President and members of the Senate. These appeals were renewed shortly afterwards. M. Méline, who was then Premier, suppressed my appeals and retained these letters ; they never reached their destination.

And these letters arrived at the very moment when the author of the crime was glorified, while I, ignorant of all the events taking place in France, was chained to my rock, crying aloud my innocence to those in power, multiplying appeals to those whose duty it is to seek out the truth and see justice done!

In March, I received my wife's letters of the beginning of January, still expressed in vague words, with the same hope, but without her being able to tell me exactly on what she founded her hope.

Then, in April, there was a new and deep silence. The letters written by my wife in the last days of January and during February, 1898, never reached me.

As to the letters which I wrote from this time on, to my wife, she never received the originals, and we have only portions of them, copied and mutilated.

Here are a few extracts from the fragmentary copies of my wife's letters, received during this period:

Five Years of My Life

"PARIS,
"*March* 6, 1898.

"Although my letters are very commonplace and desperately monotonous, I cannot help coming to talk to you.

"There are moments when my heart is so full, when your sufferings re-echo in my soul with such force and so painfully, that I can no longer restrain myself; the separation weighs too heavily on me—it is too cruel; in an outburst of my whole being I stretch out my arms to you. With a supreme effort I strive to reach you. Then I believe myself to be near you, I speak softly of hope and give you courage. All too soon, I am awakened from my dream and brought back sharply to reality by a child's voice, by some noise from without. Then I find myself again alone, so sad, face to face with my thoughts, and especially with the picture of your sufferings. How unhappy you must have been to be deprived of all news, as you wrote me in your letter of the 6th of January.

Do not forget, when you receive no letters from me, that I am with you in thought, that I abandon you neither night nor day, and that, if words cannot convey to you the expression of the depths of my love, no obstacle can hinder the union of our hearts and thoughts."

"PARIS,
"*April* 7, 1898.

"I have just received your letter of March 5. It brings news comparatively recent to us who are accustomed to suffer so much from the irregularity of the mails, and I had an agreeable surprise at finding so late a date. How misfortunes change one! With what resignation we are obliged to accept things which it seemed impossible to endure. . . . When I say that I am resigned, it is not the exact truth. I do not complain, because, until your full innocence is recognised I must live and suffer as I do; but in the depths of my heart there is revolt and indignation, and the impatience which has

been repressed during these long years of waiting overflows to the full. . . .

"PARIS,
"*June* 5, 1898.

"Here I am once more, leaning on my table, and lost in my sad thoughts; I have just written to you and, as happens to me twenty times a day, I abandon myself to a long reverie. I fly to you thus every moment, I give my nerves the relaxation of escaping from myself; and my thoughts accompany my heart, which is always with you in your far-off exile. I visit you often, very often, and since I have not yet been allowed to go and join you, I bring you all I can of myself, my spiritual personality, my thought and will, and energy, and especially my love—all intangible things, and which no human power can imprison. . . ."

"PARIS,
"*July* 26, 1898.

"When I feel too sad, and the burden of life becomes too heavy to endure, I turn

away from the present, call up my remembrances, and find new strength to continue the struggle. . . .

"LUCIE."

This was her only July letter which reached me; after that time, no more copies but the original letters were again given to me.

For me, the days passed by in extreme impatience, since I was in ignorance of what was going on concerning me. As to the appeals I had addressed to the chief magistrate of the Republic, the answer invariably made to me was: "Your appeals have been transmitted to the members of the Government, through the constitutional channels." There was nothing more, and I kept waiting always for the outcome of my demand for a revision of my trial. I was absolutely ignorant of the law, and particularly of the new law concerning revision, which dates from 1895, when I was already in captivity.

A request to be supplied with a telegraphic correspondence-code was refused.

In the month of August 1898, I wrote to my wife :

"Îles du Salut,
"*August* 7, 1898.

"Although I wrote you two long letters by the last mail, I will not allow this one to go without sending you an echo of my immense affection, or without again reiterating and making you hear always the same words, whose object is to sustain your invincible courage.

"The clear consciousness of our duty must make us stoical as regards all else. Terrible as our destiny may be, we must have souls lofty enough to defy fate until it yields to us.

"The words I have been repeating to you for so long a time are and remain unchangeable. My honour is my own possession; it is the patrimony of our children and it must be restored to them. This honour I have

demanded back from my country. I can only hope that our harrowing martyrdom may at last come to an end.

"In my former letters I spoke at length of our children, and of their sensitiveness, of which you complained, although I am sure you are bringing up the dear little ones admirably. If I speak of them, it is because in our days of happiness they were the one object and aim of our thoughts; in the unhappiness which has undeservedly fallen to our lot, they are our best reason for desiring to live. Sensibility, that which belongs to the mind and heart, is the great spring of education. What hold can one have on a careless or insensible nature?

"We must act especially by moral influence, both in the education and in the development of the intelligence; and such influence can be exercised only over a sensitive being. I am not an advocate of corporal punishment, although it may sometimes be necessary for children of rebellious nature. A soul ruled by fear always remains

enfeebled in consequence of that sentiment. A sorrowful look and severe manner are sufficient to make a sensitive child understand his fault.

"It always does me good to come to you and talk of our children, a subject which, when we were happy, was the theme of our familiar conversation. It is now our reason for living.

"If I listened only to my heart, I should write you oftener, for it seems to me—I know it is the merest illusion, but it comforts me—that at the same time and minute you may feel, across the space which separates us, the beating of a heart that lives only for you and our children, a heart that loves you. . . .

"But above everything else rises the worship of honour, in the strictest sense of the word. We must detach ourselves from the passions occasioned by grief and from the depression resulting from external causes. That honour, which is my own possession, is the patrimony and the life

itself of our children ; and, without impatience, but also without weakness, we must strive courageously and indefatigably to attain it.

"ALFRED."

At this same time, I inquired by letter and telegram what measures had finally been taken in answer to my request for a revision of my trial, to which I had always received the same enigmatic reply: "Your appeal to the President of the Republic has been forwarded to the members of the Government through the channels provided by the constitution." But silence, silence alone, was the only answer I obtained. I was ignorant of the events which had occurred and were still taking place in France. At last, trusting that I might obtain a reply by the use of extreme means, I made the declaration, in September 1898, that I should cease my correspondence until I had an answer to my demands for revision. This declaration was incorrectly transmitted by cable to my wife,

and it will be seen later on to what incidents it gave rise.

In October, I received my wife's letters written in August; in them she still expressed the same hope which, unhappily, it was impossible for her, in her letters, carefully revised and often suppressed, to strengthen by precise facts.

I again renewed my request for a reply to my petitions for revision. On October 27, 1898, while I was still in ignorance of the petition for revision made by my wife, and of the fact that her appeal had been transmitted to the Court of Cassation to be adjudicated upon by that supreme tribunal, I was at last informed that I was about to receive a final answer to the requests for revision, which I had addressed to the chief magistrate of the nation.

I immediately wrote the following letter to my wife :—

"ÎLES DU SALUT,
"*October* 27, 1898.

"I write you a few lines to send you the echo of my immense affection and the expression of all my tenderness. I have just been informed that I shall receive a final answer to my demands for revision. I am awaiting it calmly and with confidence, never doubting that the reply will be my rehabilitation. . . .

"ALFRED."

A few days later, in the first days of November, I received my September mail, in which my wife announced to me that grave events had taken place, which I should learn about later, and that she had made an application for revision, which had been granted by the Government.

This news thus coincided with the reply which had been given me on October 27. I at once wrote to my wife :

"Îles du Salut,
"*November* 5, 1898.

"I have just received your letters of the month of September, in which you give me such good news.

"In my letter of October 27 last, I told you that I was already informed that I should receive a final answer to my demands for a revision. I said to you then that I was waiting with confidence, never doubting that this answer would at last bring my rehabilitation. . . .

"Alfred."

I was still in ignorance of the fact that the petition for revision had been transmitted by the Government to the Court of Cassation, and that the hearing had already begun.

On November 16, 1898, I received a telegram worded as follows :

"CAYENNE,
"*November* 16, 1898.

"Governor to Convict Dreyfus, through the officer in command at the Iles du Salut:

"Informs you that Criminal Chamber of Court of Cassation has declared receivable the application for a revision of your sentence, and has ordered that you shall be notified of this decision, and be requested to produce your means of defence."

I realised that my application had been formally declared receivable by the Court, and that the hearing on the merits of the case was about to begin. I expressed my wish to be put into communication with Maitre Demange, my defender of 1894. Of course I knew nothing of what had been going on during all this time; I still thought the Bordereau to be the one document in the case. I had nothing to add for myself to what I had already said before the first court-martial, and nothing to change in the discussion concerning the Bordereau. I

was ignorant that the date when the Bordereau was received had been altered and modified in consequence of the suppositions put forth during the first trial as to the different documents enumerated in the Bordereau. I therefore thought the affair a very simple one, limited, as at the first court-martial, to a discussion concerning the handwriting.

On November 28, 1898, I was authorised to take exercise from seven o'clock to eleven in the morning, and from two to five in the evening, within the grounds of the fortified camp. They called by this name the space, comprised within a low stone wall, occupied by the warders' barracks near my hut. So my walk really consisted of a narrow passage around the barracks and out-buildings. But I saw again, in the full glare of the sun, the sea, which I had not seen for more than two years. I saw once more the stunted verdure of the island. My eyes could rest on something else than the four walls of the prison hut !

In December no letters came from my wife. None of the letters which she wrote me in the course of October 1898, ever reached me. I grew impatient and asked for explanations. I inquired when the hearing on the merits of the case would open before the Court of Cassation. (I did not know that the hearing had taken place on October 27, 28, and 29.) No answer was given me.

On December 28, 1898, I received the following letter from my wife :

"PARIS,
"*November* 22, 1898.

"I do not know if you have received my letters of last month * in which I described to you in their general outlines the efforts which we have made before being able to formally present our petition for a revision of your trial, the procedure adopted, and, finally, the admission of the application. Each new success, although it made me

* None of these letters ever reached me.

very happy, was poisoned by the thought that you, poor sufferer, are in ignorance of the facts, and doubtless are beginning to despair.

"Finally, last week, I had the great joy of being informed that the Government had sent a cable to advise you of the admission of our application for a revision of the case.

"Fifteen days ago, I was made acquainted with a letter from you, in which, so it seems, you had declared your resolution of writing no more, not even to me. . . .

"LUCIE."

Exasperated at so false an interpretation of my thought, I at once wrote to the Governor of Guiana a letter, couched very nearly as follows:

"By the letter which I have just received from Madame Dreyfus, I learn that she has been made only partially acquainted with a letter which I addressed to you last September, declaring to you that I should cease my

correspondence, *while awaiting the answer* to the application for revision which I had addressed to the Chief Magistrate of the nation. By communicating to Madame Dreyfus only an extract of my letter, an interpretation has been given to that extract which must have been more than painful to my dear wife. It is, therefore, the bounden duty of the person—who it is I do not know and do not wish to know—who has committed this deed to make reparation for it.

"I learned that the message which had been made known to my wife was a transmission by cable of my letter, and that the letter had been cabled in a garbled form."

At the same time, I wrote my wife the following letter:

"Îles du Salut,
"*December* 26, 1898.

"I had had no letters from you for two months. A few days ago, I received your letter of November 22. If I refrained from

writing for a time, it was because I was waiting for the answer to my application for revision, and could do nothing more than repeat myself. Since then, you should have received numerous letters from me.

"If my voice had ceased to be heard, it would have been because it was for ever silenced ; for if I have continued to live, it has been in the firm resolve to defend my honour, which is my own property and the patrimony of my children ; in the determination to fulfil my duty as I have fulfilled it everywhere and always, and as it must always be fulfilled, without fear of anything or any one, when a man has right and justice on his side.

"ALFRED."

The news which I had received during these last months brought me immense relief. I had never despaired, I had never lost faith in the future, convinced as I was from the first that the truth would be known, that it was impossible that a crime

so odious, and to which I was so utter a stranger, could remain unpunished. But, as I knew nothing of events occurring in France, and, on the other hand, saw my situation becoming daily more terrible; persecuted ceaselessly and causelessly, obliged to struggle night and day against the elements, the climate, and against mankind, I had begun to doubt that I should myself ever live to see the end of this terrible drama. My will was not weakened; it remained as inflexible as ever; but I had moments of savage despair, for my dear wife and my darling children, when I thought of the situation in which they were placed.

At last, the horizon cleared; I had glimpses of the end of my own and my loved ones' martyrdom. It seemed to me that my heart was freed from an immense weight; I breathed more freely.

At the end of December, I received a copy of the introductory speech of the prosecution, as presented by the public prosecutor at the Court of Cassation, on October 15,

1898. I read it with profound amazement.

I learned of the accusation, brought by my brother against Major Esterhazy, whom I did not know; of his acquittal, of the forgery of Henry, and of his confession and suicide. But the significance of many of these incidents was an enigma to me.

On January 5, 1899, I was examined by the President of the Court of Appeal of Cayenne, commissioned by the Supreme Court. My astonishment was great at hearing, for the first time, of my pretended confessions; of that abominable distortion of the words I cried out on the day of the degradation, and which were, on the contrary, a protestation, a vehement declaration of my innocence.

Then days and months slipped by, without my receiving any definite news, ignorant of the result of the Court's investigation. Every month, my wife, in letters which, as usual, reached me often after considerable delay, and in telegrams, spoke of her hope that the

end of our sufferings would soon come ; and this I did not see approaching.

In the last days of February, I handed, as was my custom, to the Prison Commandant Deniel, my request for provisions and necessary objects for the following month. I received nothing. I had taken a strict resolution, from which I never departed, not to complain nor to discuss the application of the penalty, for this would have been to acknowledge the principle of it—a principle I had never admitted ; so I said nothing, and went without everything, during the month of March. At the end of the month, Deniel came to tell me that he had mislaid my list and desired me to draw up another. If he had really mislaid it, he would have known of it when the boat which brought provisions from Cayenne came back. Such an act coincided too exactly with the passage of the Law of Dispossession for me not to believe that this fact was the cause of it. At that time I did not know the dirty work which this man had undertaken, and I learned it

only on my return to France. I believed him to be a simple tool—all the more that he always took pains to tell me : "I am only an executive agent"—and I know that men are to be found for every kind of work. To-day, I have every reason to think that many of his measures were taken on his own initiative, and that the harsh treatment of certain warders was due to him.

As for me, I did not know of the Law of Dispossession, and could not comprehend the length of the investigation. The case seemed to me very simple, since I knew only of the Bordereau. Several times I asked for information ; it is almost useless to say that it was never given me.

While my will did not weaken throughout these eight long months, in which I was looking daily and hourly for the decision of the Court of Cassation, my physical and cerebral exhaustion, on the other hand, grew more pronounced during this period of distressing, maddening suspense.

X

ON Monday, June 8, 1899, half an hour after noon, the chief warder entered my hut precipitately and handed me the following note :

"Be good enough to let Captain Dreyfus know immediately of the order of the Court of Cassation. The Court quashes and annuls the sentence pronounced on December 22, 1894, against Alfred Dreyfus by the first court-martial of the Military Government of Paris, and orders that the accused shall be tried before a court-martial at Rennes, &c. &c.

"The present decision is to be printed and transcribed in the Book of Records of the first court-martial of the Military Government of Paris, on the margin of the annulled sentence. In virtue of this decision, Captain Dreyfus ceases to be subjected to the convict regimen ; he becomes a simple prisoner under arrest, and is restored to

his rank and allowed to again wear his uniform.

"See that the prison authorities cancel the commitment and withdraw the military guard from the Ile du Diable. At the same time, have the prisoner taken into custody by the commandant of the troops and replace the warders by a squad of gendarmes, who will do guard duty on the Ile du Diable, according to the regulations of military prisons.

"The cruiser *Sfax* leaves Port-de-France to-day, with orders to take the prisoner from the Ile du Diable and bring him back to France.

"Communicate to Captain Dreyfus the details of the decision and the departure of the *Sfax*."

My joy was boundless, unutterable. At last, I was escaping from the rack to which I had been bound for five years, suffering martyrdom for the sake of my dear ones, for my children. Happiness succeeded the horror of that inexpressible anguish. The

day of justice was at last dawning for me. After the Court's decision, I thought that everything was going to be terminated speedily; that there was no further question of anything but mere formality.

Of my own story I knew nothing. As I said, I was still back in 1894, with the Bordereau as the only document in my case, with the sentence of the court-martial, the terrible parade of degradation, and its attendant cries of death from a deluded people. I believed in the loyalty of General de Boisdeffre; I believed in the head of the State, Félix Faure; I thought both eager for justice and truth. After that, a veil had been interposed before my eyes, and had become more impenetrable every day. The few facts I had gleaned during the last month remained incomprehensible to me. I had learnt the name of Esterhazy, the forgery of Lieutenant-Colonel Henry, and his suicide. I had only had official relations with the heroic Lieutenant-Colonel Picquart. The grand struggle undertaken by a few great minds, full of the

love of truth, was utterly unknown to me.

In the Court's decision I had come to the conclusion that my innocence was acknowledged, and that nothing more remained but for the court-martial, before which I was to be sent, to have the honour of making reparation for a deplorable judicial error.

That same afternoon of June 5, I sent away the following despatch to be forwarded to my wife :

" My heart and soul are with you, with my children, with all of you. I leave Friday. I await with immense joy the moment of supreme happiness to hold you in my arms. A thousand kisses."

That evening the squad of gendarmes arrived from Cayenne. I saw the warders go away ; I seemed to walk in a dream, to be awaking from a long and frightful nightmare.

I waited with anxiety for the arrival of the *Sfax*. Thursday evening, I saw, far away, the smoke of a steamer, and soon recognised a

warship. But it was too late for me to embark.

Thanks to the kindness of the Mayor of Cayenne, I was able to have a suit of clothes, a hat, a little linen—in a word, the attire strictly necessary for my return to France.

Friday morning, June 9, at seven o'clock, the prison boat came for me at the Ile du Diable. At last I was to leave that accursed island, where I had suffered so terribly. The *Sfax*, as it drew too much water, was anchored far away. The prison boat took me near to her, but I had to wait for two hours before they would receive me on board. The sea was heavy, the small boat, a real cockle-shell, danced on the great waves of the Atlantic. I was sick, like every one else in the boat.

About ten o'clock, the order came for me to go alongside. I went on board the *Sfax*, where I was received by the second officer, who took me to a non-commissioned officer's cabin, which had been specially fitted up for me. The window of the cabin

had been grated (I think it was this operation which occasioned my long waiting on board the prison boat). The glass door was guarded by an armed sentinel. In the evening, I understood from the movement of the ship that the *Sfax* had weighed anchor and was getting into motion.

My treatment on board was that of an officer under strict arrest. I had one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening to walk on deck. The rest of my time I was shut up in my cabin. During my stay on board I behaved naturally, as I had from the beginning, from a feeling of personal dignity, and because I considered myself the equal of all. Beyond the needs of service, I spoke to no one.

On Sunday, June 18, we reached the Cape Verde Islands, where the *Sfax* took in coal; we left on Tuesday, the 20th. The ship sailed slowly, from eight to nine knots an hour.

On June 30, we were in sight of the French coast. After five years of martyr-

CAPTAIN DREYFUS

On his way back from Devil's Island

To face p. 330

dom, I was coming back to seek justice. The horrible nightmare had its end. I believed that men had acknowledged their error ; I expected to find my dear ones, and behind them my comrades, who would await me with open arms and tears in their eyes.

That very day I had my first deception, my first sad impression.

During the morning of the 30th, the *Sfax* stopped. I was informed that a boat would come to take me ashore, without any one being willing to tell me where the landing would take place. A first boat appeared ; it merely brought the order to keep manœuvring in the open sea. The landing was postponed. All these precautions, all these mysterious goings and comings made a painful impression on me. I had a vague intuition of the facts behind them.

In the afternoon, the *Sfax*, having moved on again slowly along the coast, stopped towards seven o'clock. It was a dark night ; the atmosphere foggy, and rain fell in gusts.

I was notified that a steam-launch would come for me a little later.

At nine o'clock, I was told that a boat was at the foot of the *Sfax's* ladder, to take me to the steam-launch, which had arrived but was unable to come nearer, on account of the stormy weather. The sea had become very rough, the wind blew a gale, and the rain fell heavily. The boat, tossed by the waves, was dancing below the ladder. I jumped into it, and struck violently against the rail, hurting myself rather severely. The boat pulled away. Discomposed quite as much by such a disembarkation as by the cold and penetrating humidity, I was seized with a violent fit of fever, and my teeth began chattering. With a strong effort, however, I controlled myself, and, after tossing about on the foaming waves, reached the steam-launch, whose ladder I could scarcely climb, suffering from the injury which I had received in the legs when I jumped into the small boat. I kept silent, as always. The launch went on, then stopped; I was in total ignorance as to

where I was, or where I was going. Not a word had been spoken to me. After waiting an hour or two, I was requested to step into the small boat belonging to the launch. The night was still completely dark, the rain kept on pouring, but the sea was now more calm. I divined that we must be in a port. At a quarter past two in the morning, we landed at a place which I afterwards knew was Port Houliguen.

There I was placed in a carriage, with a captain of gendarmes and two gendarmes. Between two ranks of soldiers, the carriage brought me to a station. At the station, still accompanied by the gendarmes, and without a word having been exchanged between us, I got into a train which, after a journey of two or three hours, brought me to another station, where I alighted.

There I found another carriage waiting, which conveyed me rapidly to a town, and finally entered a courtyard. I got out, and, looking about me, perceived that I was in

the military prison at Rennes. It was about six o'clock in the morning.

It is easy to imagine what had been in succession my surprise, sadness, and extreme pain at returning in such a way as this to my native land. There, where I had expected to find men united in common ideas of justice and truth, anxious to dispel all the sorrow caused by a frightful judicial error, I found only perturbed faces, minute precautions, a night-landing through the waves of a stormy sea, with physical sufferings added to my affliction of soul. Happily, during the long weary months of my captivity, I had been able to nerve myself to an immense capacity for resistance.

We had reached July 1. At nine o'clock in the morning, I was notified that I should see my wife in a few minutes, in a room next to the one I was occupying. This room, like my own, was shut off by a close wooden grating, which did not allow one to look into the courtyard. The apartment was furnished with a table and chairs. All my interviews

with my friends and my defenders took place here. Strong as I was, violent trembling siezed me, my tears flowed—tears which I had not known for so long a time; but I was soon able to control myself again.

It is impossible for words to describe the deep emotion which my wife and I both felt at seeing each other once more. In our meeting were mingled feelings of joy and grief; we sought to read in each other's faces the traces of our sufferings; we longed to tell each other all that throbbed in our hearts, all the emotions suppressed and stifled during these long years; and the words died away upon our lips. We remained content to look at each other, concentrating in this interchange of looks all the strength of our affection and of our determination. The presence of a lieutenant of infantry, who was ordered to be present at the interview, prevented us, however, from giving way to our feelings. On the other hand, I knew nothing of the events which had occurred during the previous five years,

and had returned to France full of confidence in the speedy reparation of my wrongs. But, though this confidence had been rudely shaken by the varied events of the night I had just passed, I did not dare to question my dear wife, for fear of giving her fresh grief, and she too preferred leaving to my lawyers the task of informing me of all that had happened.

My wife was authorised to see me every day for an hour. I also saw in succession all the members of our family; and nothing could equal the joy of our meeting after so many painful years.

On July 3, Maître Demange and Maître Labori came to see me. I threw myself into Maître Demange's arms, and was then presented to Maître Labori. My confidence in Maître Demange, in his admirable devotion, had remained unchanged. I felt at once the keenest friendship for Maître Labori, who had been so eloquently and courageously the advocate of the truth: to him I expressed my deep gratitude. Then Maître Demange

gave me succinctly the history of the "Affair." I listened, breathless, and in my mind, little by little, all the links of this extraordinary drama were put together. This first recital was completed by Maître Labori. I was informed of the long series of misdeeds and disgraceful crimes proved against those who had plotted to destroy me. I was told of the heroic acts and supreme efforts made in my behalf by so many noble minds —of the defiant struggle undertaken by a handful of men of the highest character, against numerous coalitions of falsehood and iniquity. For me, who had never doubted that justice would be done, what a shattering of all my beliefs ! My illusions with regard to some of my former chiefs faded away, one by one ; my soul was filled with anguish. I was moved with profound pity and sorrow for that Army which I so loved.

In the afternoon, I saw my dear brother Mathieu, who had been devoted to me from the very first day, who, remaining in the breech during these five years, with such

courage, wisdom, and admirable strength of purpose, had shown the noblest example of a brother's unselfish affection.

The next day, July 4, my lawyers handed me the reports of the trials of 1898, the investigation of the Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation, and the final hearings before the United Chambers of the same Court. The next night, I read the Zola trial, without being able to tear myself away from it. I saw how Zola had been condemned for having penetrated and spoken the truth; I read of General de Boisdeffre's testimony, under oath, to the authenticity of the Henry forgery. But as my sadness increased on reading of all these crimes committed against innocence, and realising how men are led astray by their passions, a deep feeling of gratitude and admiration welled up in my heart for the courageous men, learned or ignorant, great or humble, who had thrown themselves valiantly into the arena, and had fought for the maintenance of the principles which are the heritage

of humanity—the vindication of justice and truth. And history will record that the honour of France was mirrored in this rising up of men of every class, of scholars hitherto absorbed in the silent toil of laboratory or study, of workmen engrossed in their hard daily toil, of political personages placing the welfare of the nation above all other interests, and battling bravely for the supremacy of justice, liberty, and truth.

Next I read the admirable report prepared for the Court of Cassation by Maître Mornard; and the feeling of deep esteem which I henceforth had for this eminent lawyer was only further strengthened when I made his acquaintance and was able to appreciate the rare quality of his lofty intelligence. Rising early, between four and five o'clock in the morning, I worked all day long. I greedily went through the various documents, progressing from surprise to surprise, amid that voluminous mass of facts. I learned of the illegality of my 1894 trial, the secret communication sent by General

Mercier to the members of the first court-martial, of forged or irrelevant documents, and the conspiracy to save the guilty man.

I also received during this time thousands of letters from known or unknown friends, from every corner of France, of Europe, and of the rest of the world. I have not been able to thank all these friends one by one, but I desire to say here how my heart melted within me at these touching manifestations of sympathy. What good they have done me! how much strength I have derived from them!

I had been very susceptible to the change of climate. I felt constantly cold, and was obliged to clothe myself warmly, although we were in the midst of summer. In the last days of the month of July I was taken with violent fits of fever, followed by congestion of the liver. I was obliged to take to bed, but, thanks to vigorous treatment, was soon on my feet again. I then began to live on a diet of milk and eggs, and nothing else, and lived strictly on it as long

Photo Gerschel

CAPTAIN DREYFUS

With his wife and children

To face p. 341

as I remained at Rennes. During the trial, however, I added kola to it, so as to be able to withstand the strain and remain on my feet, throughout the long and interminable sittings.

The opening of the trial was fixed for August 9. I kept a tight rein over my feelings, though, for the sake of my dear wife, who was evidently terribly exhausted by her continual emotions, as well as for my own sake, I was anxious to reach the end of this frightful situation. I was most impatient to again embrace my dear, beloved children, who were still in ignorance of everything, and to be able, restored to my wife and little ones, to tranquilly forget all the sorrows of the past, and live again once more.

XI

I SHALL not recount here the sittings of the Rennes court-martial.

In spite of the clearest evidence, against all justice and all equity, I was condemned.

And the verdict was pronounced "with extenuating circumstances." Since when have there been extenuating circumstances for the crime of treason?

Two votes, however, were given for me. Two consciences were able to rise above party spirit, to bend before the higher ideal, and to look only at the inalienable right of man—justice.

As to the sentence which five judges had the hardihood to pronounce, I do not accept it.

I signed my demand for a new trial, the day after the sentence. An appeal from the verdict of a court-martial can be brought only before the Military Court of Appeal, which decides questions purely of form. I

knew what had already passed after the court-martial of 1894, and founded, therefore, no hope on such an appeal. My aim was to again go before the Court of Cassation, and give it the opportunity of completing the work of justice it had begun. But at that time I had no means to accomplish this, for, in military jurisprudence, in order to appear before the Court of Cassation, it is necessary, according to the terms of the law of 1895, to bring forward a new fact, or else the proof that false evidence has been given.

My demand for revision before the military courts thus permitted me merely to gain time.

I had signed my demand for a revision on September 9. On September 12, at six o'clock in the morning, my brother Mathieu was in my cell, authorised by General de Galliffet, Minister of War, to see me without witnesses. A pardon was offered me, but in order that it might be signed it was necessary that I should withdraw my demand for

revision. Although I expected nothing from my demand, I still hesitated to withdraw it, for I had no wish for pardon. I thirsted after justice. But, on the other hand, my brother told me that my health, already greatly shaken, left little hope that I should be able to resist much longer under the conditions in which I should be placed; that my liberty would allow me more easily to prosecute the reparation of the atrocious judicial error of which I was still the victim, since it would give me time, to obtain which was the only reason of my appeal to the Military Tribunal of Revision. Mathieu added that the withdrawal of my demand was counselled and approved by the men who had been, in the Press and before the world, the chief defenders of my cause. Finally, I thought of the sufferings of my wife and family, of the children I had not yet seen, and the thought of whom haunted me ever since my return to France. Accordingly I agreed to withdraw my appeal, but I did so while declaring very clearly my absolute and

unchangeable intention to pursue the legal revision of the sentence of Rennes.

The very day of my liberation, I published a Note which expressed my thought and my unconquerable purpose.

It was as follows :

"The Government of the Republic gives me back my liberty. It is valueless to me without honour. From this day, I shall continue to demand the reparation of the frightful judicial error of which I am still the victim.

"I am resolved that all France shall be convinced, by a final judgment, that I am innocent. My heart will not be appeased until there shall be not one Frenchman who imputes to me the abominable crime committed by another."

THE END.

LIBF OF BON BRA OF ROYAL ASIA

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON, & Co.
London & Edinburgh

00022920

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018